

Ali The Magnificent

by :

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ALI, THE MAGNIFICENT

The life of Hazrat Ali stands out as a beacon, radiating its light into the darkness of this world. A world torn asunder by strife, struggle and wars, a world in which the value of human life is regarded as next to nothing.

It must be borne in mind that it was Ali who gave a distinctive outlook to the intellectual, social, cultural and political concepts of his times. He was the Warrior-Saint of Islam, who spent his entire life fighting the holy wars and who in spite of his multifarious activities lit the torch of knowledge which gave unprecedented impetus to learning—a marvel of the times in which he lived. (The wonderful personality he possessed has made him the greatest hero of all times.) In the world of today, his many-sided spiritual precepts might help to solve some of the problems with which the world is faced today. His ideas were conciliatory and his message was always one of peace. He lived for justice and was very firm in his belief that every one should have a right to live in security, that there should be food, shelter and clothing for all. Humanity he considered as one family where there should be tolerance for all—irrespective of race, creed and colour and irrespective of wealth or adversity.

Nowhere was his humane attitude more apparent than when he was dispensing justice. He had the strictest ideas of duty and responsibility and even the poorest and most insignificant of suitors always found him ready to give his case a fair and prompt hearing. He was quick to forgive an offender as he was slow to resent an injury, a humane attitude which too many of his contemporaries were prone to interpret wrongly as a weakness; it was this humane attitude which above all stamped Ali as the ideal man.

In order to keep his finger on the pulse of the people, Ali often disguised himself as a traveller, perambulating the lanes of the city at night to find out for himself the condition of the poor and the needy, and to lend succour to them and at the same time to bring the delinquents to book. His tremendous physical energy thus found an outlet in the performance of many a philanthropic deed, but even so, his sense of responsibility to his people was so great that he was frequently struck with remorse for what he had left undone. Hence the bitter tears of self-deprecation which he so often shed at his prayers.

He sought always to prevent those civil wars in which blood would be shed in vain, but in his fight against the forces of evil and barbarity he showed extraordinary determination, unwavering purpose and an iron will. He was at once a recluse and a warrior, a thinker contemplating in the wastes of the desert and a commander fighting the Lord's battle against heretical foes. In his personality he combined a pious resignation to God with the greatest heroism in combat.

In his attempts to establish God's kingdom on earth, he was constantly beset by enemies who wanted to extinguish the torch of Islam, and whose activities were the more resented as they were carried out in the name of God and religion. Pitched as he was against envy, hatred and malice, he never permitted himself to falter or to stray from the path of right, even though this singleness of purpose was to cost him his life.

In the words of Gibbon, "The birth, the alliance, the character of Ali which exalted him above the rest of his countrymen, might justify his claim to the vacant throne of Arabia. The son of Abu Talib was in his own right, the chief of Bani Hashim and the hereditary prince or guardian of the city and temple of Mecca. Hazrat Ali had the qualification of a poet, a soldier and a saint; his wisdom still breathes in a collection of moral and religious sayings; and every antagonist, in combats of the tongue or of the sword was subdued by his eloquence and valour. From the first hour of his mission to the last rites of his funeral, the Apostle Muhammad was never forsaken by a generous friend, whom he delighted to name his brother, his vicegerent, and a faithful Aaron of a second Moses."

CHAPTER I: BIRTH OF ALI

Hazrat Ali (A.S.) was born in the Holy Kaaba at Mecca on Friday, the 13th day of Rajab, 600 A.D. Both the Holy Prophet and Hazrat Ali belonged to the same clan. They were Hashimites, the clan of Bani Hashim. Muhammad's father was Abdulla, and that of Hazrat Ali, Abu Talib. They were brothers and their father was Abdul Muttalib. Thus the Holy Prophet and Hazrat Ali were cousins. Hazrat Ali had two brothers, Ja'far and Aquil.

Hazrat Ali's mother Fatima was the daughter of Asad, a famous magnate of the Quraish clan. She was also the aunt of the Holy Prophet, being the wife of Abu Talib, the Prophet's paternal uncle. When she was pregnant, she promised Muhammad to make over to him whatever child was born to her, be it male or female. Muhammad, aware of the issue that would be brought forth, gladly accepted the offer .

Ali's holy personality began its wonderful manifestation even during the period of his mother's pregnancy. At that time Muhammad had not yet announced his prophet hood, and yet when he passed before Fatima, who being his aunt was senior to him, she used to stand up in reverence and respect for him, and somehow something within her never allowed her to turn her face away from Muhammad as long as he was around.

When people asked her about this peculiar behaviour of hers, she would say that she could not help it, that some irresistible urge from within made her do so.

This statement was disbelieved by those who wished to test her. So one day they made her sit and they asked two strong men to hold her down when Muhammad passed by. Then they asked Muhammad if he would walk in front of her, to which he gladly agreed. As he came in front of her, Fatima began to rise and she stood erect throwing both men aside. Muhammad who alone was aware of this mystery, used to smile.

He was keenly awaiting the birth of his cousin Ali.

During her pregnancy whenever Fatima was alone, she heard from within her a mysterious whisper which was to the glorification of God.

To understand the significance and importance of his place of birth, it is essential to know a little of the history of the Kaaba.

The first House of God was rebuilt and renovated at the command of Allah by the Prophet Abraham assisted by his worthy successor, his son Ismail, under the supervision and guidance of the Angel Gabriel. The verses of the Koran say :

"And remember when Abraham raised the foundation of the House with Ismail, (Praying) Our Lord! accept (this service) from us; verily Thou and Thou (alone) art the All-hearing and All-knowing."

Chap. 2-Verses 127.

"And remember when we made the House a resort for mankind and a sanctuary (saying), Take ye the station of Abraham a place of prayer (For you); and covenanted with Abraham and Ismail (saying) purify ye two my House for those who make the circuit, and for those who prostrate (adoring)".

Chap. 2-Verses 125.

This verse clearly depicts the purpose of the Kaaba, namely that it was to be a place of worship and that it was pure and sacred.

It was to this sacred place, the Holy Kaaba, that Providence led the mother of Hazrat Ali. She felt weighed down by intense pain when Ali was due to be born. She knelt to pray. When she raised her head from her supplication, the wall of the House split as if by a miracle, to admit her within, and a portion of the wall returned to its normal position. The Kaaba was sealed, with Fatima within.

This news spread fast all over Mecca. The keys of the shrine were brought to unlock the door but all efforts ended in failure.

On the third day of this happening, with awe the wonder-struck crowds surrounding the Kaaba witnessed the lock falling of its own accord, and to their surprise Fatima emerged radiant from the sacred premises, cheerfully holding her new-born babe in her arms. Muhammad was waiting to receive her and her new-born child, and the first face that little Ali saw in this world was the smiling face of the Apostle of God, Muhammad, whom he greeted thus :

"Assalaamo alaika ya Rasoolallah" (Peace be upon thee O Prophet of Allah). Thus it is an undisputed fact that Ali was born a Muslim, and his first words testified to the Prophethood of Muhammad. Muhammad lovingly took him into his arms. Ali's first bath after his birth was given by Muhammad with a prediction that this babe would give him his last bath. This Prophecy was fulfilled on the death of the Holy Prophet. The child accepted no other food other than the moisture of Muhammad's tongue, which he sucked for several days after his birth. Muhammad fondled him in his lap in his infancy, and chewed his food and fed Ali on it; he often made him sleep by his side, and Ali enjoyed the warmth of Muhammad's body and inhaled the holy fragrance of his breath.

The superstitious Arabs of those times, held that every person as he came into the world was touched by the devil, and that was why new-born babies cried at birth. Since Ali was born in the sanctuary of God, to which the devil had no access, he did not cry at birth but was found smiling. Thus God had interposed a veil between the evil spirits and the child who was to grow up to exalt His Holy Name. Ali has been described as having been found like a priceless pearl in the shell of the Kaaba, or a sword in the sheath of Allah's House, or as a lamp found in Allah's abode shedding light all around.

The sanctified birth of Ali, as that of Prophet Muhammad, was foretold in the scriptures, when God said to Abraham, who asked for a blessing on Ishmael; "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly, twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation." (Genesis 17 : 20).

The felicitous Prophecy in Genesis 17:20 about the advent of a prophet is said to point to the appearance of Muhammad and Mi. While the 'Twelve Princes' of the Mosaic Scriptures are held to be none other than the twelve Holy Imams.

Hazrat Ali's birth inside the Kaaba is unique. This is the only known occasion on which a child was born within the precincts of the holy place ever since its foundation thousands of years ago.

When Ali was about five years of age, Muhammad took him away from his uncle Abu Talib to bring him up as his own child. Thus from his earliest days, Ali came directly under the tutelage of the Apostle of God, to share his high ethics and morals. Ali was ever ready to run the risk of his own life for Muhammad at times of danger and he was affectionately attached to him with unswerving faithfulness. The cousins were so fond of each other that they lived together till death parted them.

As Hazrat Ali says : "The Holy Prophet brought me up in his own arms and fed me with his own morsel. I followed him wherever he went, like a baby camel which follows its mother. Each day an aspect of his character would beam out of his noble soul and I would accept it and follow it as a command."

Ten years in the company of Muhammad had kept him so close and inseparable that he was one with him in character, knowledge, self-sacrifice, forbearance, bravery, kindness, generosity, oratory and eloquence. From his very infancy, he prostrated himself before God along with the Holy Prophet, as he himself said, "I was the first to pray to God along with the Holy Prophet." According to Ibne-e-Maja page 12, Raizunnazarah Vol. II page 158, Usdul Ghulia Vol. IV page 1, and Izalathul Khofa page 252, Ali used to say : " I have prayed to God along with the Holy Prophet seven years before any other person did."

The First Believers : Ibn Abbas, Anas, Zaid bin Aqram, Salman Farsi, and others have said, "Indeed it was Ali who was the first to declare his Islam, and some say that there is a consensus for this!" Major Janet's translation of Suyuti's History of the Caliphs page 171.

The illustrious Ali was thus the first to readily embrace Islam and testified to Muhammad being the Apostle of God.

Muhammad used to say the three men viz., Ezekiel, Habib Najjar and Ali, who came forward first to bear testimony to the faith of their Prophets, Moses, Jesus, and himself respectively, were acknowledged as ¹ Siddiq. Ali repudiated the claim of any other to this epithet ².

Often did the Holy Prophet go into the depths of the solitary desert around Mecca with his wife Khadija and his young cousin and disciple, Ali, so that they might together offer their thanks to their God for His manifold blessings.

Once they were surprised in this attitude of prayer by Abu Talib, the father of Ali, who said unto Muhammad "O son of my brother, what is this religion that thou art following? "

¹ Ahmad Hanbal in his *Manaqib*; Nasai in his *Khasaas*; Hakim in his *Mustadrak*.

² Ibn Athir.

"It is the religion of God, of His angels, of His prophets, and of our ancestor Abraham", answered the Prophet. "God has sent me to His servants to direct them towards the truth".

Then turning to Ali, his son, the venerable patriarch Abu Talib required what his religion was. "O Father", answered Ali, "I believe in God and His Prophet and go with him."

"Well my son," said Abu Talib, "He will not call thee to aught save what is good, wherefore thou art free to cleave unto him".

The first occasion where the Holy Prophet nominated Hazrat Ali as his vicegerent was the meeting of Dawat-e-Asheera.

CHAPTER II:

MUHAMMAD PROCLAIMS HIMSELF A PROPHET

In the fourth year of his Mission, Prophet Muhammad was commanded by Allah to give warning to his near relations : "Warn thy relatives of nearer kin," Sura XXVI213; so he invited them to an entertainment, with a view to carrying out the Commandment. A meal, consisting of a large cup full of milk with bread made of one sa' (about 31-seers) of wheat flour and meat, was arranged by Ali, according to the instructions given to him by the Prophet. Forty of his relations of Banu Abd-al-Mottalib attended, among whom were the Prophet's uncles, Abu Talib, Abbas, Hamza and Abu Lahab; Muhammad laid this seemingly frugal repast before them and tasted it himself beginning with the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. They all followed and ate to their fill, but to their surprise nothing was finished; everything appeared as it was when served. Abu Lahab got up, exclaiming that Muhammad had enchanted them all, and the party broke up. Muhammad could not say a word and they left; but he soon invited them again to a like feast, and this time he addressed them thus : "O Sons of Abdal-Mottalib! I know no man in all Arabia who brought for his kindred a more excellent thing than that which I have brought for you. It will serve you in this life and in the life to come. Will you believe me, I ask, if I tell you that an enemy of yours is to fall upon you by day or by night?" They all replied with one voice that they believed him to be a truthful man. Thereupon he said, "Then know you all that Allah has sent me to guide man to the right path, and has commanded me to call first my near relations, to invite them to His Holy Will and to warn them against His Wrath. You have seen the miraculous feast you are entertained with, persist not in your infidelity. O sons of Abd-al-Mottalib! Allah has never sent a Messenger but that he appointed one, his brother, heir and successor to him from amongst his own relations. Who therefore will henceforth be assisting me in my noble work, and become my brother, my heir and my successor? He will be to me just as Aaron was to Moses."

THE FIRST DECLARATION Muhammad Proclaiming Ali His Successor

Muhammad, who had delivered the speech with full religious fervour, was disappointed to find the whole assembly silent, some wondering, others smiling with incredulity and derision.

No one was forthcoming to accept him as spiritual guide. Muhammad seemed to feel sorry for them. At this juncture Ali, the favourite cousin of the Prophet, stepped forward, but Muhammad bade him wait till one of his elders came forward. The Prophet vainly tried thrice. At last Ali, disliking the ridiculing attitude which the assembly was now adopting, impatiently came forward for the third time and enthusiastically declared that not only did he believe in Muhammad to be the Apostle of God, but that he offered himself, body and soul, to the good pleasure of the Prophet. "O Prophet!" said he, "I am the man; whosoever rises against thee, I will dash out his teeth, tear out his eyes, break his legs, rip up his belly. O Prophet, I shall assist thee, and I will be thy vizir over them." Thereupon Muhammad, throwing his arms round the brave and courageous youth and pressing him to his bosom exclaimed : "Behold, my brother, my vicegerent and my successor (or Caliph). Let all listen to his words and obey." Hearing this, the whole assembly, with loud contemptuous laughter, ironically exhorted Abu Talib to bow down before his son Ali, and yield him-obedience. Thus dispersed Muhammad's guests with hatred in their hearts and derision on their faces.

Thomas Carlyle in his 'Heroes and Hero-worship' says : "The assembly broke up in laughter. Nevertheless it proved not a laughable thing; it was a very serious thing. As for this young Ali, one cannot but like him. A noble minded creature, as he shows himself now, and always afterwards; full of affection, of fiery daring. Something chivalrous in him; brave as a lion, yet with a grace, a truth and affection worthy of Christian Knighthood."

"Ali started acting as the bodyguard of the Holy Prophet even when he was just a lad of thirteen or fourteen years.

The young men of the Quraish under the instigation of their parents used to throw stones at the Holy Prophet.

Ali took up the work of acting as his defender; he fell upon those young men, broke the nose of one, teeth of the other, pulled the ears of the third and threw down the fourth. He often fought against those who were older than he, was often hurt, but he never forsook the self-imposed duty. After some days he got the nick name of Quazeem (the breaker or thrower) and nobody dared to throw anything at the Holy Prophet when Ali was around, and he would not allow the Holy Prophet to go out alone." (Aavan Vol. 111 Page 280).

CHAPTER III: ALI AS A YOUTH

Physical Appearance and Features

Ali was a man of medium height with very big black and piercing eyes; one look at him was sufficient to know his radiant qualities of heart and head. He was muscular, had broad shoulders, powerful arms, broad chest, strong and roughened hands, a long and muscular neck and a broad forehead. He had a superb head with a face as noble as the man himself. His nose was straight and his mouth beautifully formed. The mobility of his face reflected the receptive mind and the fiery vigour of his intellect, but when he was in repose, all who came in contact with him received an ineffable impression of his spirituality. His profound and magnetic personality remained with him during his later years. The physical fatigue of incessant warfare, combined with the mental exhaustion that arose from having to deal with endless conspiracies and political treacheries was to leave its mark on his personal appearance.

Tabranee says : "He used to walk with very light tread and was very agile in his movements, had a very smiling face, very pleasing manners, a jovial temperament, very kind disposition and very courteous behaviour. He would never lose his temper."

CHAPTER IV:

ALI AS A PROTECTOR & DISCIPLE OF THE PROPHET

Hijrat and the conspiracy to murder Muhammad

The Quraish, beholding with alarm the exodus of the followers of the Prophet and dreading the consequences of the new alliance of Muhammad and his followers with the people of Yathrib, formed a strong conspiracy to prevent his escape to Yathrib, under any circumstances. They kept close watch over the movements of the Prophet and took measures to secure his person in order to put him to death. They held council to discuss how they should do away with Muhammad. One opined that he should be imprisoned in a cell having but a little hole, through which he should be given scanty food till he dies. Another suggested that he should be banished. These proposals were rejected by others as too mild lest he should find means to escape and seek revenge. At length they decided to kill him by forcing into his dwelling in the night; they appointed one man from each of their families to join in the murderous attack upon Muhammad. This was a ruse to trap the Hashimites into avenging themselves on at least one family which would give their enemies enough provocation and justification for a fight.

This conspiracy was hardly at work when the angel Gabriel appeared to the Prophet, informed him of the scheme against him, and communicated to him the permission of Allah to his Hijrat or emigration from Mecca to Yathrib ¹ that very night. This is mentioned in the Quran thus:

"And when the Infidels plotted against thee, that they might detain thee (as prisoner) or put thee to death, or turn thee out; and they plotted (against thee) but God laid a plot (against them); and God is the best layer of plots. (i. e. God's watchfulness outwits the wicked in frustrating their designs against the virtuous)." Sura VIII-30.

Migration of the Prophet from Mecca

By the time the murderers began to assemble before the dwelling of the Prophet, he apprised his favourite cousin, Ali, of the impending danger, and of his intention to leave the house at once for good. He directed Ali to lie down on the bed in his place and cover himself with his (the Prophet's) well known green mantle. Unhesitatingly Ali carried out the instructions and Muhammad, repeating the ninth verse of Sura Ya Seen of the Holy Book, sallied forth unobserved by the assailants as if they were stricken with blindness.

"And We have set a barrier before them, and a barrier behind them; and We have covered them with darkness; wherefore they shall not see." Sura XXXVI-9.

His heart swelling with love and gratitude at being selected for such a dangerous task, Ali asked his Master,

¹ Yathrib changed its ancient name, and was henceforth styled Medinat-un-Nabi, the City of the Prophet, or shortly, Medina, the city par excellence.

"If I sleep here in your bed in your stead, will you be safe?" "Yes," said the Holy Prophet. He then instructed Ali to remain behind at Mecca for some time in order to discharge for him certain trusts and charges and bequests which were incumbent on the Prophet. He instructed Ali to look after the women and children and send them to Medina quietly.

The task Muhammad entrusted to Ali was a major one, and no small an undertaking for a youth of hardly twenty three years; but the way in which he carried it out, showed Ali's astonishing capacity. He was called upon to deputise for Muhammad at the risk of his own life, for it was highly probable that the mob would kill Ali taking him to be Muhammad, or else would get furious at being foiled of their chief objective, and in that case would also kill him instead of the Prophet.

When all the assassins had been assembled, they (in the words of W. Irving) paused at the door and looking through a crevice, beheld, as they thought, Muhammad wrapped in his green mantle, and lying asleep on his couch. They waited for a while consulting whether to fall on him while sleeping or wait until he should go forth. At length they burst open the door and rushed towards the couch. The sleeper started up, but instead of Muhammad, Ali, son of Abu Talib stood before them. Amazed and confounded they demanded, "Where is Muhammad?" "I know not," replied Ali sternly, and walked forth, nor did any one venture to molest him.

John Davenport describes the incident in the following words : "After surrounding the house, the assassins then forcibly entered it, but finding instead of their purposed victim, the youthful Ali, calmly and resignedly awaiting the death intended for his Chief. So much devotedness excited the pity even of those men of blood, and Ali was left unharmed."

Ali's Devotion

Ali's devotion to the Prophet without fear of running the risk of losing his own life was much appreciated by the All-knowing Judge of man, the merciful God, who sent down the angels Gabriel and Michael to guard him from the murderous mob; and informed the Prophet on his way to Medina of His approval of Ali's resignation to His Will, with the words contained in Verse 20 of Sura II of the Quran.

"And of men there is one who selleth his soul for the sake of seeking the pleasure of God; and God is gracious unto His servants." Men of understanding and intelligence will ever admire Ali till the end of time for the tranquillity of mind displayed by him in the midst of this terrible struggle between life and death.

Also, they will marvel at the Prophet's wise selection of Ali for this night's dramatic performance.

Something in Ali's bearing, his intensely personal heroism, some magnetic quality of his demeanour, must have been responsible for his survival on this occasion. The mob held back and we know that Ali stayed behind in Mecca for some days to return the properties left in trust by the Holy Prophet to their rightful owners as directed.

Ali hastened to Medina

Having satisfactorily accomplished these responsibilities entrusted to him and having arranged for the safe departure of the Prophet's family members to Medina, Ali hastened forward on foot to Medina, travelling only in the night and hiding himself in the day, lest he should fall into the hands of the Quraish. He reached Qoba three days after the arrival of the Prophet, with his feet sorely lacerated and bleeding. The Prophet, overjoyed at seeing him, received him with open arms, and finding him tired and exhausted, shed tears manifesting his fondness and affection for him; he subsequently applied the moisture of his mouth to the wounds of Ali's feet with his own hands and prayed for him. This produced instantaneous relief.

The converts at Qoba desired the Prophet to lay the foundation stone of a mosque for them. The Prophet asked some of his companions to ride on his camel and to make a circuit round the place. It was his intention to build a mosque in the place where the camel stopped. Some of his companions mounted on the back of the camel, but it refused to budge. Then the Prophet asked Ali, his vicegerent, to make the attempt. As soon as Ali set foot in the stirrups, the camel stood up and the Prophet directed Ali to let the animal go by itself without guiding it. Ali let loose the rein, and the camel went round a small piece of ground and came back to its starting point and knelt down. The Prophet marked the site and fixing the position of Qibla, he laid the foundation stone for the mosque. There is a mention of this mosque in the Quran vide Sura IX-109 last portion.

This was the last halt of the Prophet before he set out for Medina. Qoba is situated only two miles to the south of Medina, and is remarkable for its beauty and fertility.

The Holy Prophet left Qoba on Friday the 16th Rabi I., corresponding (according to Mr. Caussin de Perceval) with the 2nd of July 622 ¹.

Boreida b. Al Hasib with his seventy neophytes (new converts) formed a procession, carrying as standard his lance with a piece from his turban fastened to its upper end.

It being Friday, the Prophet stopped at Raanawna, a place midway between Qoba and Medina, and performed his Friday Prayers, followed by a sermon to the Muslims present. This Friday Service and the Sermon were the first, to be observed always thereafter.

When the Prophet after the Service, was proceeding to Medina, the whole spectacle with its ceremonial solemnity looked really grand, like a triumphal procession headed by a monarch, increasing in its majestic grandeur as it approached the City, where thousands of spectators had assembled to have a look at the great Prophet of Islam. History of the world records no greater example of the triumph of truth.

Each tribe, which he passed through, desired the honour of his presence and requested him to take up his abode with them. The Prophet, refusing all these offers, said that the camel, which he rode on, was inspired and would take him to the proper quarter. The camel proceeded on to the eastern sector and knelt down in the open courtyard of the Banu Najjar, near the house of Khalid b. Zaid, known in history as Abu Ayyub Ansari, the then head of the Banu Najjar family-the family to which Muhammad's grand father Abd-al-Mottalib's mother Selma belonged. He was delighted to be fortunate to have the honour of the Prophet's presence.

¹ Caussin de Perceval Vol. iii. pp. 17-20; Ibn-Hisham p. 335. 18

After his arrival in Medina, one of the first acts of the Holy Prophet was to establish the brotherhood, individually between the people of Medina (known as Ansars/Helpers) and the emigrants of Mecca known as Muhajirs, and to lay the foundation of the Prophet's mosque known as Masjid-e-Nabawi.

The Prophet inculcated the fundamental principle that brotherhood depended not on blood but on faith alone. The rights of family inheritance within Islam, were expressly valid and sacred. These mandates resulted in a considerable extension of the Muslim community.

His own brotherhood the Prophet bestowed upon Ali, his cousin, as previously he had done in Mecca, declaring according to Suyuti, "Thou art My Brother in this world and in the next".

The Muslims were sympathetic and considerate to one another after the brotherhood was enjoined. They were so zealous in their faith that nothing else came before Islam; and anything outside of it was looked upon as unholy. In fact, they were animated with a strange spirit of firmness in their adherence to the Prophet and of cohesiveness to hold together. Gibbon gives the account in the following words : "To eradicate the seeds of jealousy. Muhammad judiciously coupled his principal followers with the rights and obligations of brethren; and when Ali found himself without a peer, the Prophet tenderly declared that he would be the companion and brother of the noble youth. The expedient was crowned with success; the Holy fraternity was respected in peace and war, and the two parties vied with each other in a generous emulation of courage and fidelity." W. Smith's p. 460. The ordinance of brotherhood is given thus in the Quran :

"Verily those who believe and have emigrated and have tried with their substance and their souls for the cause of God, and those who have given them shelter and been helpful, shall be near of kin (heirs) the one to the other." Sura VIII-73 ¹.

The Holy Prophet took up his temporary residence in the house of Abu Ayub Ansari for seven months, until the Masjid-e-Nabavi, with proper quarters for himself, was built in the courtyard where the camel had stopped.

The construction work was distributed among the Mohajirs and the Ansars-the Prophet, too, had his share of the work. But he was seldom allowed to work, as Ammar Yasir used to accomplish the Prophet's share of work in addition to his own. Ammar Yasir was the first and foremost to begin the foundation of the mosque, and Ali was the first to offer his services as a labourer working alongside with the other members of the fraternity, shovelling the earth when the foundations were being laid and later carrying on his shoulders, baskets of mortar and brick which he passed on to the masons. While thus labouring, Ali used to recite the following verse :

Whosoever builds a mosque
And works whether sitting or standing
Puts up with the pain of labour
While others shirk work
For fear of dust and pain
Both of these verily
Cannot equal each other.

When the mosque and residential houses were ready, the Prophet and Ali, (his chosen companion) shifted from their temporary residence to the permanent ones.

¹ Taliqat Ibn-e-Saad Vol. III page 13, Riazunnazarah Vol. II page 1, Usdul Ghalia Vol. I page 269, Muntakheb Kanz-ul Ummal page 145, Kunuz-ul-Haquaiq page 20.

CLOSING OF THE DOORS OPENING INSIDE THE PROPHET'S MOSQUE.

Later on, some companions of the Prophet also built their houses close to the Mosque with doors opening into the courtyards. Sometime afterwards, while they were leisurely sitting in the Mosque, a voice was heard : "Ye people! Close your doors opening into the Mosque." The people were struck with wonder to hear the voice, but they sat dumb without stirring to carry out the Command, till they heard again the injunction to close the doors on pain of Divine Wrath. Terrified at this warning, they all approached the Prophet, who was in his apartment. Ali also came out of his apartment which was adjacent to the Prophet's rooms since the day of Fatima's marriage with him. He stood by the Prophet when he ordered that all the doors opening into the Mosque, excepting that of Ali and his own, should be closed. People began to murmur. The Prophet was angry at their attitude and addressed them thus : "Verily, God ordered His apostle Moses to build a holy Mosque, and he allowed Moses, Aaron and the two sons of Aaron, viz. Shabbar and Shabbir, to live therein. I was likewise ordered to construct a holy mosque wherein myself and my brother Ali and his two sons, Hasan and Husain are allowed to live. Verily, I do only what I am ordered to do. I never undertake to act on my own wish. Certainly I have not ordered of my own accord to close your doors or to let Ali's door open. It is God who granted Ali an abode in the Holy Mosque." Consequently, the companions, whose houses skirted the quadrangle of the Mosque, closed their doors.

It is recorded on the authority of Sa'd, that the Apostle of God said to Ali : "It is not lawful for any to be in the Mosque while under the obligation of performing a thorough ablution except for me and for thee," Major Jarret's translation of Suyuti's His. p. 175.

Omar b. Al-Khattab said : " Verily, Ali hath been endowed with three qualities, of which had I but one, it would be more precious to me than were I given high bred camels." It was asked of him what they were? He replied : "His marriage with Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet; his remaining in the Mosque while that is permitted to him which is not lawful for me; and carrying the Standard on the day of Khaibar." Major Jarret's translation of Suyuti's His. p. 175. Tirmizi Mishkath 463, Nasai page 9, Riazunnazarah Vol. II page 192, Ibn-e-Maghazili and Kanzul-Ummal page 29.

CHAPTER V: ALI'S MARRIAGE WITH FATIMA THE DAUGHTER OF THE HOLY PROPHET

During the second year of Hijrat, Hazrat Ali's marriage with Fatima, the only daughter of the Holy Prophet, took place. Muhammad had received many offers for her hand from very rich families in Medina, as also from the chiefs of mighty clans in Arabia but he declined to consider these offers. He said he was awaiting the order of God for the person to whom his daughter should be wedded.

Some one then suggested to Hazrat Ali that he should place a proposal for himself before the Holy Prophet. Ali approached the Prophet feeling shy and modest, but when Muhammad heard the proposal he was so pleased that he smiled and said, "Ahlan wa Merhaban" (It is a welcome and happy proposal.)

Muhammad took the consent of his daughter for this proposal. The betrothal of Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, to his cousin and faithful disciple, Ali, took place in the month of Ramazan 2 A.H., but the nuptial ceremonies were performed two months later in Zilhajj. This alliance - as revealed to the Prophet-was ordained by God, Who, he said to Fatima, had informed him of his choice from the noblest on the earth of two blessed men, one being her father (himself) and the other her husband (Ali); and that he had decreed his (the Prophet's) lineal descendants to spring forth from the couple (Ali and Fatima) and not direct from himself.

According to Dailami in Firdous-ul-Akhbar, Khuiar Zamin Manaqib and Yousuf Kanji in Kifayat-ut-Talile, the Holy Prophet announced that Gabriel had brought the good news that God had performed the marriage of Fatima and Ali in Heaven and the Prophet should perform the same on earth.

All the Muhajireen and Ansar of Medina assembled in the mosque, while Hazrat Ali was seated before the Holy Prophet with all the modesty of a bridegroom. The Holy Prophet first recited an eloquent sermon and then announced, "I have been commanded by God to get Fatima wedded to Ali, and I do hereby solemnize the matrimony between Ali and Fatima on a dower of 400 Misquall." Then he asked Hazrat Ali, "Do you consent to it O Ali?" "Yes, I do, O Holy Prophet of God." Then the Holy Prophet raised his hands in supplication and prayed thus : "O my God ! Bless both of them, sanctify their progeny and grant them the keys of Thy beneficence, Thy treasures of wisdom and Thy genius; and let both of them be a source of blessing and peace to my people." Then Ali prostrated himself before God. After a service of thanksgiving in which the Holy Prophet asked God for His blessings on the couple, praying, "O Almighty Lord! Bless them both and better their endeavours and give them noble children". The marriage was then performed. Addressing Ali, the Holy Prophet then said, "O Ali, lucky art thou indeed! Of all the virtuous women of the world, your wife is queen." Then turning towards Fatima the Holy Prophet said, "Of all the virtuous men of the world your husband is the king. May God keep you pious and chaste and bless your children. Verily I am a friend to him who befriends you both and an enemy to him who is your enemy."

From this marriage, Ali and Fatima had two sons, Imam Hasan and Imam Husain, and two daughters, Janab-e-Zainab and Janab-e-Umme Kulsoom.

The wedding ceremony of the only daughter of Muhammad well demonstrates the ideal simplicity with which it was conducted. The wedding feast was of dates and olives; the nuptial couch was a sheepskin; the ornaments, the general outfit and the articles of necessity for the bride consisting of only a pair of silver armlets, two shirts, one head tiara, one leather pillow containing palm leaves, one grinding mill, one drinking cup, two large jars and one pitcher. This was all, compatible with the circumstances of the Prophet Muhammad and his son-in-law Ali, who had to sell his coat of mail to raise the dowry required.

It may be recalled that Fatima's mother was that generous lady Khadija whose fabulous wealth was spent by the Prophet on the widows and orphans of Muslims, and who was content even when nothing was left for her daughter.

The true grandeur of the marriage lay not in the ostentations, but in the blessings of Heaven for which the marriage is the most memorable in the annals of Islam. The couple tied in matrimonial alliance by God-were destined to be the parents of an illustrious progeny termed the sons of the Prophet, who are distinguished from, the rest of the

Muslim world as divinely commissioned Imams or the Commanders of the Faithful, and the rightful successors of the Apostle of God. They are universally acknowledged by Muslims as the fountain-head of piety and wisdom. Hasan and Husain, the sons of Ali and Fatima, played in the lap of the Prophet, who showed them proudly from his pulpit and called them the Chiefs of the youths of Paradise. The parents themselves were as exalted as their children. The Prophet used to say, "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate." Ali, the gallant hero as he proved himself on all occasions of undaunted valour, had won for himself the title of 'Lion of God' from the Prophet. Fatima, who possessed the love and confidence of the Prophet and God, was ranked as one of the four ladies 'Perfect in Faith' with whom God had deigned to bless this earth, viz. ¹ Asia, the wife of Pharaoh, Mary, the mother of Jesus, Khadija, the wife of Muhammad, and Fatima, the wife of Ali.

1 It is related that Asia, the daughter of Mozahem, because she believed in Moses, her husband cruelly tortured her, fastening her hands and feet to four stakes, and laying a large millstone on her breast; her face, at the same time was exposed to the scorching heat of the sun; her anguish, however was alleviated by the angels shading her with their wings and the view of the mansion prepared for her in paradise, which was revealed to her on her pronouncing the prayer in the text: at length God received her soul; or, as some say, she was taken up alive into paradise, where she eats and drinks.

The Holy Prophet called Fatima the Chief of the women of Paradise and superior to all of them, and according to Bokhari, Muslim, Tirmizi, Dailami, Tibrani, Hakim, Abu Nayeem and a host of commentators, the Holy Prophet enjoined that Fatima is a part and parcel of himself and whoever caused the slightest grief to her, caused grief to the Prophet and to God Himself and that God is pleased with those with whom Fatima is pleased and God is angry on those who have incurred the wrath of Fatima.

¹ 'Sale' from Jalaluddin-al-Zamakshari.

CHAPTER VI: ALI THE HEROIC DEFENDER OF ISLAM

The first battle of Islam at BADR

(200 Miles from Mecca and 80 Miles from Medina) The emigration of the Holy Prophet to Medina had turned the enemies from Mecca more hostile, and they constantly kept on thinking how they could overthrow him, and put an end to Islam. The Meccans and their allies started to bring their raids to the very outskirts of Medina, destroying the fruit trees of the Muslims and carrying away their flocks.

The winter of 624 A. D. saw the invasion of Medina by a strong force of Meccans led by Abu Jahl (an uncle of the Prophet) consisting of an army of 1000 strong with 700 camels and 100 horses.

Receiving information about this force, the Prophet decided to meet the enemy outside Medina. He set out with three hundred and thirteen of his followers. This small force was marshalled out of Medina with the youthful Ali holding the Banner of the Prophet. ¹

Warfare in those days followed a different pattern. Before the general battle began, a number of duels were fought between the leading warriors on each side. When the Muslims reached the fertile vale of Badr, a favourite watering place and camping ground on the caravan route, three stations northwards from Mecca, the Prophet ordered a halt, taking up a suitable position near a stream of fresh water, to await the arrival of the infidel army. It was on the next day, Friday, 17th Ramazan 2 A.H. or January 13th 624 A.D., that the enemy, blowing their trumpets, approached the Muslims, and both forces were arrayed in battle.

Three of the infidel warriors, Utba, the father-in-law of Abu Sufyan, his brother Shaiba, and Al-Walid came out of the ranks and arrogantly challenged the Muslims. Three Ansars of Medina stepped forward to meet this challenge. This greatly enraged the Meccans who refused to combat with the Ansars saying, "We have not come all this way to cross arms with the Medinites, against whom we bear no grudge. We challenge the people of Mecca who have the courage to defy us." Upon this Ali and Ubayd ah, cousins of the Prophet, and Hamza his uncle, responded to the challenge. In the words of Col. Bodley, "At the taunt of the Quriashite, Ali dashed out of the Muslim ranks glittering in breast-plate and helmet. He was soon followed by Ubaydah bin al-Harith, a paternal cousin of Muhammad and Hamza who wore an ostrich feather in his cuirass. The three companions were thus closely related to Muhammad and fulfilled the Quraish for Hashimite blood!"

¹ Tabari; Kamil; Ibn Athir; Ahmad Hanbal; Durr Manthur.

"The three duels were as rapid as they were murderous. Hamza killed Shaiba, while Ali killed Al-Walid. Ubaydah was mortally wounded, but before he fell, Ali and Hamza were able to come to his rescue. Hamza hurled himself at Utba, and with a sweep of his sword cut off his head. In a few minutes three of Mecca's most important warriors had been sent to find out the truth about the hell which Muhammad had promised them!"

"With a cry of rage three more Meccans darted from under Abu Jahl's banner and assailed the Muslim champions (Ali and Hamza). They too went down before the sword of Islam. A further three were dealt with the same fate. There was a moment of hesitancy among the Quraishites. Muhammad did not miss his advantage. With a sharp order he sent his soldiers charging into a general attack."

The line of the Quraish wavered and a number of their bravest and noblest fell; they took to flight ignominiously, and in their haste to escape they threw away their armour and abandoned their transport animals with all their camp and equipage. Seventy of the bravest Quraish were slain and forty-five taken prisoners, and their commander, Abu Jahl, was amongst the slain.

Though it was the first engagement of the youthful Ali, he showed surprising results and was praised by one and all. He killed no less than sixteen-though some historians give him credit for thirty-six--of the bravest and the most prominent of the Quraish army.

Battle of OHAD.

¹ The Prophet reached Ohad in the morning of Saturday, the 7th of Shawwal, 3 A.H. (January or February 625 A.D.) and found the Meccan forces face to face, ready to advance for the battle. The Quraish advanced in the form of a crescent and the right wing of their cavalry was led by Khalid b. Walid, a notorious warrior. Abu Amir, a Meccan champion, stepping forward with his fifty archers, showered the arrows first towards the Muslims, who retaliated promptly. Thus the fight began. The Meccan archers turned back and their standard bearer, Talha b. Abi Talha, coming forth, challenged the Muslims. Ali stepped forward and struck off one of his legs. He fell down and another champion hoisted the standard. He was killed by Hamza. A third now took the standard and he was slain by Ali. Thus nine or ten standard bearers fell one after the other only by Ali's sword. ² It is a noteworthy incident that Talha the first standard bearer of the Meccans lost one of his legs by a stroke of Ali's sword, fell down and his lower garment being loosened, he became naked. Ali, instead of finishing him, turned his face from him and hit him no more. The Prophet marked the event and exclaimed, "Allah O Akbar" (Great is the Lord), and when he asked Ali why he had spared the man, he said the man was nude and entreated for the sake of Allah to spare his life. Ali and Hamza, the champions of Badr, unsparingly dealing out death, worked havoc among the enemy. Hamza, however, while duelling with Saba b. Abd-al-Uzza, a Meccan champion, was treacherously speared from behind by Wahshi, an Ethiopian slave, who lurked behind a rock with that intent, having been promised by Hinda, the wife of Abu Sofyan, his freedom, if he could avenge the death of her father and brother slain by Ali and Hamza in the battle of Badr. Now Ali, taking Abu Dajana' Mos'ab b. Omeir and Sahel b. Honeif, Muslim champions with him, charged the enemy. The force of the charge broke the ranks of the enemy, the whole host wavered and Ali with his Muslim champions, gained the enemy's camp. They made the Meccan army turn and flee, leaving their camp to the Muslims, who at once proceeded to appropriate it.

¹ Ibn Athir, Ibn Hisham; Tabari

² Tabari; Ibn Athir.

¹ But their eagerness for spoil turned the tide of victory, which was already gained by Ali and his Muslim champions. The archers posted at the defile deserted their posts to join in the plunder, leaving the subaltern, Abdallah b. Jobeir, in spite of his protests, with only about ten men. Khalid, the Meccan commander of the cavalry, who behind the defile was awaiting a suitable chance to effect his charge, succeeded in dexterously emerging through and cutting down the small guard of the ten men, and charged furiously the rear of the Muslims. Mos'ab b. Omeir, a champion of Muhammad, who bore a great resemblance to him, fell dead. Ibn Soraqa proclaimed aloud that Muhammad was slain. The flying Meccans turned back. Their banner, which was lying low on the ground, was picked up by a Meccan named Omra bint Alqama and then lifted high up by a slave named Sowab and the Meccans clustered around it. Most of the Muslims, including many of the Companions of the Prophet took to flight. ²

This sudden change of fortune checked the Muslims, who found themselves surrounded by the Meccans. It was all confusion so that it was not easy to distinguish friend from foe. Discipline could not be restored.

¹ Ibn Athir ; Tarikh-al-Khamis. Tabari; Tarikh-al- Khamis; Tafsir Kabir; Minhaj-al-Nabowat.

² Tarikh al Khamis, Tabari, Tafsir Kabir, Tafsir Dur-re-Mansoor, Suyuti. Tafsir Gharaib-ul-Bajan Neshapuri, Mustadrik and ad at- i f-un-Nabowat

Some were saying that Muhammad would not have been killed ¹ had he been a true Prophet, ² others were talking of seeking pardon of Abu Sufyan and taking refuge with him. (Sur. III-138 refers to these people thus: "And Muhammad is no more than an Apostle; already there have passed before him Apostles: what then if he dies or is killed, will ye turn back on your heels? But he who turneth back on his heels will not harm God at all; surely God will reward the grateful." Sur. 111-142 refers to them thus : "O ye who believe, if ye follow those who disbelieve, they will turn ye back upon your heels, and ye shall be turned back losers.")

³ Some of the Prophet's adherents, however, resolved not to survive him and they fought and perished in the struggle. Anas b. Nadzar, uncle to Anas b. Malik, having seen Omar b. Khattab and Talha b. Obeidallah sitting leisurely along with some others, asked them what they were doing. They said they had nothing to do since Muhammad was slain. Hearing these words Anas addressed them aloud thus: "My friends ! Though Muhammad be slain, certainly Muhammad's Lord liveth and dieth not : therefore value not your lives since the Prophet is dead, but fight for the cause for which he fought." Then he cried out, "O God! I am excused before Thee, and acquitted in Thy sight of what they say," and drawing his sword fought valiantly till he was killed. Sale p. 52, from Al-Beidzawi. The Angel Gabriel appeared to the Prophet with the verse which meant to inform him that among his followers there were persons who looked only to this life and also those who cared for the next life. (Sur-iii-146 "Of you are those who chose this present world and of you are those who adopted the world to come hereafter.")

Ali, who was still defending bravely, ran to the Prophet who was all alone, and stood by his side. ⁴ The Prophet inquired why he did not flee with the others, to which he replied that he belonged to him and had no business with the others and that he being a believer would not like to turn a disbeliever or an infidel. Presently, one after the other two parties of the Quraish were sent to attack the Prophet. He asked Ali to defend him, and the gallant hero repulsed them with such intrepidity that he was praised ⁵ by Angels, whose voice was heard saying : "Zulfiqar is the only effective sword and Ali the unique champion."

¹ Tabari; Ibn Hisham.

² Tarikh-al-Khamis.

³ Tabari-vol-iii, Ibn, Athir; Tarikh-a1-Khamis.

⁴ Tabari ; Ibn Athir ; Madarij-al-Nabowat, Habib-ql-Siyar ; Rawdzat-al-Ahbab.

⁵ Habib-al-Siyar; Rawdzat-al-Ahbab.

Ali helped by Gabriel.

¹ Ali received sixteen wounds, four of which were so serious that he was falling down from his horse, but on each of these occasions a beautiful youth took hold of him, lifted him up to his saddle and soothed him with these encouraging words : "Go on fighting, O hero! God and His Prophet appreciate thy services." This was none other than Gabriel the Evangel, who praised Ali to the Prophet for his zeal and ardent devotion to him at the time when all others had deserted him. The Prophet told Gabriel : "No wonder! Ali comes of me and I myself come of him," i.e. both of us are part and parcel of one and the same Celestial Light;" whereupon Gabriel remarked that he also came of both of them, i.e. he also was created from the same Light as Muhammad and Ali.

¹ Madarij-al-Nabowat; Ma'arij-al-Nabowat.

The Prophet Wounded.

In the melee above referred to, Obba b. Khalf, a Meccan champion, rushed towards the Prophet aiming at him with his spear; but he was himself killed with his own spear; the Prophet snatching it out of his hands and dealing him a blow, striking him dead. Another tradition ¹ says that he had received a wound from the Prophet's own hand but died of the same wound on his return to Mecca. Soon after this, the Prophet was wounded by a stone from a sling aimed at him by Otba, brother of Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, which struck the Prophet on the mouth, cutting his lips and shattering two of his front teeth. ² He was wounded on the face also by an arrow, the iron head of which could not be extracted by himself, and he lay bleeding for some time on the ground. ³ Blessed the timely aid and friendly hand of Ali, who, repulsing the enemy, came back and finding the Prophet in this condition conveyed him to a place of safety, extracted the arrowhead, staunched his blood and tended him, aided by his wife Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet. No doubt Ali proved himself now, as before and as hereafter, the defender or right-hand of the Prophet on all occasions of danger, in conformity with God's Decree which the Prophet had seen inscribed in Heaven on the night of his Me'raj.

The reader may also recall the way Ali risked his own life in defending the Prophet, on the occasion of his escape from Mecca, by laying himself upon the couch in place of the Prophet, covering himself with the Prophet's well-known green mantle, and thus misleading the Meccans for some hours in their search and pursuit of the Prophet, who succeeded during the interval to hide himself in a cave on mount Thaur a hill to the South of Mecca.

¹ Al Bedzawi

² Ibn Athir; Tarik-a1Khamis.

³ Tarikh Islam by Zakir Hosaini (vol. ii. page 1000).

The end of the Battle.

On finding out that the Prophet was only wounded and not killed, the Muslims began to rally round him. The Meccans, having no courage to rout them, contented themselves with the honour of snatching back the victory from Muhammad; and left the field after mangling and mutilating the dead bodies of the Muslims. Halting at Rowha, 8 miles homeward from Ohad, Abu Sufyan felt uneasy at the utter fruitlessness of his campaign and began to contemplate a raid upon Medina. The Prophet, on the other hand, suspecting some treachery at the enemy's hasty retreat, resolved on immediate action and so pursued them next morning as far as Hamra-al-Asad, where he was informed that the Meccans receiving intelligence of his advance had already taken their road home.

The Meccans lost one hundred and three men in the battle; of these, twenty-one had fallen under the sword of Ali. Among the Muslims there were seventy martyrs. The bravest of the Muslims who fell dead in the battle, were Hamza b. Abd-al-Mottalib, Mos'ab b. Omeir, Sa'd b. Al-Rabi, Ammara b. Ziyad and Hantzala a son of Abu Amir, the Meccan champion, who was the first to come forward from the ranks of the Meccans with fifty archers to charge the Muslims. Among the slain, the body of the Prophet's uncle Hamza b. Abd-al-Mottalib was found mutilated. The fiend. Hinda, wife of Abu Sufyan, had his liver taken out, sucked it and quenched her thirst for avenging the death of her father who was killed by Hamza in Badr. The Prophet collected all the dead bodies of the Muslims and buried them, offering prayers for each. He observed that the martyrs were his companions, for whose perfection in faith he would bear witness on the Day of Judgment.

Death of Ali's Mother.

Ali's mother, Fatima-binte-Asad, also loved Muhammad like a son from the time when, at the age of six, he entered her home. After the death of Abd-al-Mottalib, she had affectionately looked after him. At the time of her death in the year 4 A.H., the Holy Prophet had her covered with his own shirt, after her bath preparatory to her burial. He took part in the digging of her grave, and when it was ready, he first lay down in the grave and sanctified it, then he prayed for her. When the people asked him the reason for showing such favours to the deceased, the Holy Prophet replied, "After Abu Talib if ever I was grateful to any one, it was this pious soul who mothered me, nurtured me, brought me up and took me as her very own son."

The Battle of Khandaq.

The Jews were not idle after being expelled and formed a coalition with the other tribes who were banished from time to time. They left no stone unturned to annihilate their common enemy, the Prophet. They stirred up the Jews of Khaibar to join them against him. They sent deputations to the Bedouin tribes and to the Quraish in Mecca. They succeeded in concluding a treaty with the Meccans, binding them conjointly to oppose Muhammad to the last. They also succeeded in bringing about an alliance with the great Bedouin tribes of Ghatafan, Solaim, Bani Qais and Bani Asad to suppress Islam. It was contemplated to attack Medina in a body in order to destroy the Prophet and his religion at its very roots.

The Meccans, four thousand strong, having three hundred horses and fifteen hundred camels, were joined by six thousand of the allies from the Jews and the Bedouin tribes; and the three armies set out, ten thousand strong, under the command of Abu Sufyan in the month of Shawwal, 5 A.H. (Feb. 627 A.D.)

The Entrenchment Defence.

¹ The Prophet received intelligence of the invasion before the approach of the enemy, but had little time to prepare for a confrontation. He resolved this time to defend himself at Medina, so he began preparations for a siege. The stone houses of the town were built so close to one another as to make a high strong and continuous wall for a long

distance, excepting the north-west corner, where a wide open gap could afford the enemy an easy ingress. At this place, at the happy suggestion of Salman Farsi, who was familiar with the mode of defending cities in other countries, a trench, fifteen feet in width and fifteen feet in depth, was dug. The work was portioned out amongst the Muslims, the Prophet himself sharing it by carrying the excavated earth. In six days the trench was finished, deep and wide along almost the whole length of the defence. The houses outside the town were evacuated, and the women and children were accommodated for safety on the tops of the double-storied houses within the entrenchment. These arrangements were hardly completed when the approach of the enemy was reported. The Muslim army was immediately marshalled and entrenched behind the ditch; and the Prophet encamped in the centre of the entrenchment in a tent of red leather, on a space appearing like a crescent. The camp had the rising ground of 'Sila' on its rear and the trench in front.

The enemy on beholding the trench was struck dumb with astonishment. This mode of defence was not known to the Arabs, and they were at a loss to understand how to overcome this obstacle; they therefore laid siege. Unable to come to close quarters for some time, they perseveringly directed their attacks with archery. Meanwhile, Abu Sufyan attempted to instigate the Jewish tribe of Qoraitza to break their pact of allegiance with Muhammad.

¹ Tabari, Ibn Athir, Rawdhat-al-Ahbab.

The Qoraitza Jews breaking their Pact of Neutrality.

The Nadzirite Hoyay b. Akhtab, the most zealous promoter of opposition against Muhammad was sent to negotiate with Ka'b b. Asad, the prince of the Qoraitza Jews, and he succeeded in winning him over to the side of Abu Sufyan, disregarding the pact of neutrality with the Prophet. It was agreed that the Qoraitza would assist the Quraish after ten days' preparation, and would attack the rear of the Muslim army from the northwestern quarter of the town, which lay on the south-east of their fortress and was easily accessible to them.

Rumours of this reached the Prophet, who deputed two chief men of the Aws and the Khazraj, Sa'd b. Moazh and Sa'd b. Obada respectively, to ascertain the truth.

They proceeded towards the Jews, and, after making searching enquiries, came back and reported to the Prophet that the temper of the Jews was even worse than feared.

This news alarmed him. These apprehensions having been confirmed, it was necessary to guard against surprise or treachery. The north-western quarter of the town, which lay on the side of the Jewish stronghold, was the least capable of defence. To protect the families of his followers throughout the city, the Prophet could do nothing but to detach a considerable number of men from his force of three thousand, which was barely adequate for the long line of the entrenchment. To meet this emergency, he had to deploy two parties, one of three hundred men under Zaid bin Haritha, his freed man, and another of two hundred men under a chief of Medina, to patrol the streets and lanes of the town day and night.

Thus the strength of the force at the Defence was reduced to 2,500 men, as against the 10,000 of the enemy. The prolongation of the siege was still more troublesome to the Muslims, as the already inadequate number of men guarding the outposts of the entrenchment line got no relief; they were wearied with keeping a vigilant watch unceasingly day and night. Besides hunger, on account of having fallen short of provisions, they had to suffer very much from the heat of the sunny days and the chill of the cold nights in the open air.

The Enemy clearing The Ditch.

More than a fortnight had thus elapsed, when at length a select party of the besiegers' horsemen found the narrowest and weakly guarded part of the Ditch. Amr b. Abd Wudd, Nawfal b. Abdallah and Dzarar b. Al-Khattab led by Ikrima b. Abu Jahl, spurring their horses leaped forward towards the Muslims, and challenged them to single combat. 'Abu Sufyan with Khalid b. Walid waited on the other side of the trench to witness the issue of the fight.

In the battle of the 'Khandaq' (or the Ditch) when Muhammad had to meet the maximum strength of the forces of the heathens from Mecca and when everyone in the Muslim camp had refused to go against Amr, the challenging hero of the enemy, it was only Ali who, although a youth, readily offered to fight the giant warrior. When Ali stepped forward against the giant warrior the Apostle of God exclaimed: 'Go forth the whole of Faith against the whole of infidelity.'

Ali wins the day.

¹ The Muslims at the sight of Amr were awe-struck and paralysed. None of them ventured to come forward as his antagonist, as he was famous for his prowess and was reckoned among the Arabs as one equal to one thousand antagonists. None but Ali stood up, but the Prophet bade him wait. Again Amr roared for his opponent and again Ali was forthcoming, but the Prophet stopped him. At his third call, he tauntingly asked the Muslims whether none of them wished to enter Paradise as a martyr. Still no one was found to respond to the challenge except Ali, who impatiently stepped forward. The Prophet, now permitted Ali, and putting his own turban upon his head, his own coat of mail over his body, armed him with his own sword the Zulfigar and sent him to his adversary.

1 Rawdzat-al-Ahbab; Tarikh-al-Khamis; Rawdzat-al-Safa; Habibal-Siyar.

"It is a struggle between Faith and infidelity.; the embodiment of the former is bound to crush the entirety of the latter," ¹ exclaimed the Prophet, when Ali, the illustrious hero of Islam was proceeding onward to Amr b. Abd Wudd, the famous giant of the infidels. Then lifting up his hands Muhammad prayed : "O God ! Obeida my cousin, was taken away from me in the battle of Badr, Hamza my uncle in Ohad. Be merciful not to leave me alone and undefended. Spare Ali to defend me. Thou art the best of Defenders."

² When the two (Amr and Ali) stood face to face, Amr said to Ali : "Nephew, (as he was a friend of Abu Talib, the father of Ali) by God, I do not like to put thee to death." Ali replied : "But by God, I am here to kill thee." Amr, enraged at this reply, immediately alighted and advanced towards Ali. Ali sprang forward and so started a duel which will always be remembered, for it decided the fate of the Meccans, as their morale was being destroyed by the death of Amr. It did not take Ali long to realize that Amr, in spite of his age was as agile as his reputation had made him out to be. The duel went on for some time, finally like a flash of lightning Ali darted forward and in one sweep of his scimitar struck off Amr's leg. Amr tottering on one leg, denounced the Holy Prophet and Ali and their family. Picking up the severed limb, he flung it at Ali with all his might. It was his last effort, and Ali was nearly stunned, but in a moment he had recovered and plunged his sword into Amr. At last the voice of Ali, sounding 'Allaho Akbar' (Great is the Lord) was heard, which in "icated victory. The Divine Decree which the Prophet saw inscribed in letters of Celestial

1 Sirat-al-Mohammediya; Hayat- 1-Haiwan.

2 Ibn Athir; Abul Fida.

Light in the Heavens on the night of Meraj was found by him fulfilled on every such occasion.

¹ Beholding the fate of their renowned champion, Amr's comrades in the enterprise rushed back to escape, spurred their horses and all gained the opposite side of the ditch except Nawfal, whose horse failed in the leap and fell into the ditch. Being overwhelmed with a shower, of stones by the Muslims, he cried out, "I would rather die by the sword than thus." Hearing this appeal Ali leaped into the ditch and dispatched him.

The Sister of Amr B. Abd Wudd.

Contrary to the custom, Ali did not strip Amr of his armour or clothes. ² When Amr's sister came to the corpse she was struck with admiration at the noble behaviour of her slain brother's adversary; and finding out who he was, she felt proud of her brother having met his fate at the hands of the person who was known as the Unique Champion of spotless character. She expressed herself thus : "Had his conqueror been other than the one who killed him, I would have wept over Amr all my life. But (I feel proud that) his antagonist was the Unique Spotless Champion."

Ali's valour praised by The Prophet.

³ The ever-victorious Ali, the 'Lion of God' was thus signalized in this Defence, as on previous occasions in the battles of Badr and Ohad. The Prophet declared that Ali's one stroke on the day of the Ditch is superior to the devotional worships performed by both the worlds (Men and Angels) till the day of Judgment. (Vide Hakim's Mustadrak Vol. I, Page 32 and Dailami's Firdous-ul-Akhbar).

1 Rawdzat-al-Ahbab; Izalatal Khifa, Tarikh-al-Khamis.

2 Tarikh-al-Khamis.

3 Madarijal Nabawat ; Hakim in his Mustadrak ; Firdows-alAkhbar; Rawdzat-al-Ahbab.

The Enemy's last attempt.

Nothing further was attempted by the enemy that day; but great preparations were made during the night, Khalid with a strong party of horsemen vainly attempting to clear the ditch. Next morning the Muslims found the whole force of the enemy marshalled against them along the line of entrenchment. They sought to gain the Muslim side of the Trench, but were repelled at every point. The Trench, fully served its purpose; it could not be crossed, and during the whole operation only five Muslims were killed. The enemy, notwithstanding their large numbers, were paralysed by the vigilance of the Muslim outposts. In their utter frustration they regarded the Trench as an unworthy subterfuge, being a foreign artifice with which no Arab was acquainted.

Infidelity of the Quraitza Jews.

Meanwhile Abu Sufyan demanded of the Quraitza Jews the fulfilment of their engagement to join in a general attack on the following day; but the Jews doubted the Quraish and their allies and feared that if the struggle proved a failure, the besiegers might conveniently withdraw and leave them to their fate. They accordingly demanded hostages in security against such an event, and pleaded their Sabbath as a pretext for not fighting the following day. This attitude aroused, in turn, the suspicions of the Quraish that the Jews, for making their peace with Muhammad, were demanding hostages of them for the purpose of handing them over to Muhammad. Abu Sufyan and his confederate chiefs were greatly disheartened. Their hope so long centred on the Quraitza Jews falling upon the city in the rear of the Prophet's defences, was now changed into a fear of hostilities from the treacherous Quraitza themselves.

Troubles in the enemy's Camp.

Dispirited at the loss of their bravest General, Amr b. Abd Wudd, and wearied, as they were, after the two vigorous but unsuccessful attempts, the Quraish and their allies had no courage to attempt another general assault. Discord was also rife among them. The Bedouins had no forage for their camels and horses, which were dying daily in considerable numbers. Provisions were running short. Above all, the weather was intolerably troublesome to them. Night set in upon them cold and tempestuous. A storm of wind and rain blew dust in their faces, overturned their tents, extinguished their fires, overthrew their cooking vessels, and sent their horses astray. They exclaimed that it was all due to witchcraft and enchantment of Muhammad, who would be seen shortly falling upon them with his whole force, and they were greatly struck with terror.

The Prophet who was in earnest prayer for the last three days appealed to the Almighty for his help in these words: "O Lord ! Revealer of the Sacred Book, Who art swift in taking account : turn the confederate host ! Turn them to flight, O Lord, and make them quake." "The fourth night, when he had finished his prayers, he asked if any one was willing to go to the camp of the enemy to spy on their activities. He promised Paradise to the person who might venture out for that purpose. Huzhaifa readily responded to the call and proceeded in the darkness of the night to the camp of the enemy where he saw devastations wrought by the tempest, and found Abu Sufyan in a gloomy mood. He came back to his camp, and reported in detail to the Holy Prophet what he had seen of the enemy. He was delighted to find his appeal to God being answered. "O true believers! Remember the favour of God towards you, when hosts (of infidels) came upon you and We sent against them a wind, and hosts (of Angels which) ye saw not, and God beheld what ye did." (Sura xxxiii-9).

¹ Tafsir Durr Manthur; Sirat Mohammediya; Sirat-al-Halabia Tarikh-al-Khamis; Rawdzat-al-Ahbab,

Siege raised by the Enemy

Either upset by the severity of the weather or struck with terror at this manifestation of Heavenly Wrath, after the loss of their best warrior at the hands of AR, Abu Sufyan precipitately decided to raise the siege and to march back at once. Summoning the allied Chiefs, he made known to them his resolve. Issuing orders to break up the camp and immediately mounting his camel, he hastily made his way to Mecca followed by his armies; Khalid, with two hundred horses, guarded the rear against pursuit. The Ghatafans and the Bedouin allies retired to the desert from where they had come and not a single soul was to be seen in the field.

In the morning the Muslims discovered to their great joy the sudden disappearance of the enemy and found themselves unexpectedly relieved.

They broke up their camp, in which they had been suffering the hardships of the siege for the last twenty-four days in the month of Shawwal-ZILQAD, 5 A.H. (or February-March 627 A.D.), and as soon as they received permission from the Prophet to leave the ground beside the hill of 'Sila' they dispersed with the greatest alacrity to their homes.

Operations against The Banu Quraitza Jews in 5 A. H.

The Jewish tribe of Banu Quraitza had settled towards the eastern sector of Medina in a fortified stronghold. They had gone against the Medina Charter, which they had signed. They had entered into a secret treaty with Abu Sufyan and helped him against the Muslims in the battle of 'Khandaq'.

Soon after his return from the entrenchment, while laying aside his armour, the Prophet was washing his hands and face in the house of his beloved daughter Fatima, whom he used to visit before proceeding to his house on return from an expedition or excursion, the Angel Gabriel brought him a command to proceed immediately against the Quraitza Jews.

The Prophet instantly sent Ali with his Standard, and he himself with his army followed him and laid siege to the fortress of the Jews. The siege lasted twenty-five days, and Ali who was in command, reduced them to such a state that starvation stared them in the face. He then led the assault on their stronghold, capturing it so quickly that he was able to offer his afternoon prayers in the compound of the citadel.

Operations against The Banu Mustaleq- : 6 A. H.

The Jewish tribe of Banu Mustaleq had settled down in a neighbouring province of Medina. The Prophet having received intelligence of their activities, sent Boreida b. Al Hasib to ascertain the truth about their meditated raid on Medea.

Boreida confirmed the news upon his return, and the Prophet marched on them on the 2nd Shaban, 6 A. H. with Ali as his standard bearer. The Muslim army was able to advance far into their territory without any opposition, for Ali's reputation as a warrior had preceded him, striking terror into the hearts of the tribesmen who fled from the approaching army. All the warriors of the Banu Khuzza fled, leaving the Banu Mustaleq to face the army of the Holy Prophet on their own.

In the single combats that were fought, Ali crossed swords with Quttada the Jewish leader of the tribe and killed him. Another Jewish warrior, Malik, confronted Ali, and he too was quickly disposed of. After Malik, his son came out to avenge the death of his father, but met the same fate. This completely disheartened the Jews, and they laid down their arms and agreed to pay tribute.

The Holy Prophet's Pilgrimage to Mecca in 6 A. H. (628 A. D.) and The Treaty of Hudaibiya.

The Holy Prophet desired to make a pilgrimage to the Kaaba. Ever since he migrated to Medina six years ago he had always been a longing on his part to do so.

Hasty preparations were made, and the Prophet informed the people of Medina that this trip was meant only as a pilgrimage. Arrangements for the journey having been completed, the Prophet led fourteen hundred men to Zul Hulefa on the road to Mecca. All swords were to be sheathed and the wearing of armour of any kind was forbidden.

Before approaching Mecca, the Prophet was informed that the Meccans hearing about his journey had despatched a cavalry of two hundred to prevent him from proceeding further. To advance was out of the question as the Prophet had not come to give them battle; so he diverted to the right towards Al Hudaibiya. Reaching Al Hudaibiya, on the verge of the sacred territory surrounding Mecca, his camel Al Qaswa stopped and knelt down as if refusing to go further. The Prophet took this sign as a Divine Omen that he should not proceed further; he ordered a halt and encamped there-. While the Prophet and his followers waited here, the Quraish continued to hold counsel around the Kaaba. Some were for driving Muhammad away by force, a few were for allowing him to perform the pilgrimage, but the majority wanted to prevent him from entering the Kaaba while still avoiding warfare. This led to a stalemate. Negotiations continued between the Prophet's representatives for some days without the deadlock being broken. The Quraish remained adamant, not agreeing to allow the Prophet to enter Mecca.

Finally a treaty was signed between the Meccan representative Suhail bin Amr and the Holy Prophet. The Prophet instructed Ali, his Vicegerent, to write down the treaty at his dictation, and it began thus : "In the name of God, the most Gracious and Merciful", Suheil objected to this, and said that it should begin as the Meccans used to do. Thus: "In Thy name, O God!" The Prophet agreed and asked Ali to write "Bismeka Allah Hoomma". Next he dictated:

"This is the Treaty made between Muhammad the Apostle of God. and Suheil son of Amr." Suheil again raised an objection and said that had the Meccans acknowledged him as an Apostle of God they would never have taken up arms against him ¹. Instead of "the Apostle of God", Suheil asked the Prophet to have his father's name written. The Prophet again yielded, but Ali had already written the words, "Muhammad the Apostle of God". ² The Prophet bade Ali to erase the words under objection, but as Ali hesitated, the Prophet himself taking the writing materials obliterated the words and had the words, "son of Abdullah" substituted in place of "Apostle of God". ³ He prophesied at the same time, addressing Ali, that he would similarly have to yield on a similar occasion in his own time. This prophecy was fulfilled when a treaty was concluded between Ali and Muawiya some thirty years later.

By the terms of the treaty it was agreed that the Muslims should return immediately to Medina but that they could perform the pilgrimage the following year. During the period the Meccans would evacuate the city for three days and camp outside its walls. The Muslims should come as pilgrims, unarmed, save for a sword each, which they could carry for self-defence. It was further agreed that there would be a ten-year truce between the Meccans and the Muslims, and that the Meccan caravans should be allowed to pass without hindrance through their territory. It was also agreed that any Meccan who escaped to Medina to accept Islam would be handed back to the Meccans.

For the time being warfare was avoided and peace returned. The Muslim pilgrims returned to Medina only to find themselves once more threatened, this time by their implacable enemies-the Jews.

¹ Abul Fida

² Habib al-Siyar; Tazkirat-al-Kiram

³ Rawdzat-al-Ahbab; Habib-Siyar; Ibn Athir

The Conquest of Khaibar. 6A.H. (628 A. D.)

Khaibar is situated about a hundred miles to the north east of Medina, and means literally a fortified place. The Jews of Khaibar constituted a serious threat to the Muslims : The Jews who had lost their fights against the Holy Prophet, had slowly and imperceptibly collected in the vicinity of this fort, and had begun to incite their brethren to wage war against the Muslims. The valley surrounding Khaibar was considered as one of the most fertile of the desert oasis, and its great gardens of date palms were most jealously guarded by the various Jewish tribes whose territory it was. The Jews of Khaibar were considered the bravest warriors, and they posed a most powerful challenge to the supremacy of Islam.

Sorties of The Jews.

The valley of Khaibar was studded with fortresses strongly situated on rocky hillocks, which numbered about ten, and some of which such as Al-Qumas, Al-Qatieba, Al-Watih and Sulalim were deemed impregnable. Outside help was now impossible. The Jews, counting upon their numbers - far greater than those of the comparatively small horde of the enemy - upon their valour as well as upon their strongholds, resolved to resist. But when besieged in any of their citadels, they could not resist very long and eventually evacuated it after one or two sorties. Thus all the inferior fortresses, with which the Muslims had begun their attacks, fell one after the other into their hands.

The Citadel of Khaibar

At last the Jews rallied round their chief, the king of their nation, named Kinana, son of Al Rab and grandson of Abul Haqiq. He lived in a strongly fortified citadel of Khaibar named Al-Qamus, built on a steep rock which was considered impregnable, having high and frowning walls; it was well defended by bulwarks closely guarded by brave soldiers as it also contained his treasures. As soon as the Prophet happened to glance at the fortification, he first of all offered prayers to the all-powerful Lord, praying for successful delivery of the citadel into the hands of the Muslims; and as long as he remained encamped before it, he daily offered prayers on a great stony rock named Mansela, and every day he made seven circuits around it. In later times a mosque was erected at this spot in memory of the Prophet's worshipping place, and it became an object of veneration to the pious Muslims.

The Siege of The Citadel

The siege of A I -Qamus was an extremely difficult task for the Muslims, who had never before forced their way into such a stronghold. It lasted for some time and tried the skill and patience of the Muslims, who had fallen short of provisions, and the country all around was laid waste by the Jews during the period - about a month - when they were engaged in storming the minor fortresses. The Jews had destroyed even the date palms round their citadel to starve the enemy; and, having resolved to fight desperately, they had posted themselves in front of the citadel. The besiegers attempted to force their approach, but every attack was repulsed. The Prophet, who was during these days suffering badly from a headache, handed over his Standard to Abubekr b. Abu Oohafa, directing him to lead the assault, but the latter was strongly repulsed by the Jews and forced to retreat. Next the Prophet sent his men headed by Omar b. Al-Khattab, carrying his Standard, but the result was no better than a forced retreat. The Prophet, having thus been disappointed by the failure of his prominent Companions, exclaimed, "Tomorrow I shall hand over my Flag to one who loves God and His Prophet, and who is the beloved of the Lord and His Prophet, and who is a fearless charger who never turns his back upon a foe; at his hands the Lord will give victory". Every one of the Prophet's Companions was anxious to be signalized on the morrow as the "beloved of God and His Prophet." They passed the night in great anxiety as to which one would prove to be the blessed one. No one thought of Ali, the cousin and the Vicegerent of the Prophet, the hero of all previous wars, because he was suffering badly from sore eyes and could not see anything. The morning dawned, but the Prophet appeared not to take notice of any particular individual. When he broke the silence he asked for Ali, and all of them with one voice answered, that he was at a considerable distance at the time and was also badly suffering from sore eyes, and that he was utterly unable to look around. The Prophet commanded them to bring Ali to him. Selma b. Aki fetched Ali. The Prophet taking Ali's head into his lap, applied the saliva of his mouth to his eyes. Instantaneously his eyes became so clear as if he had never suffered from the disease. It is said that throughout his life, he never had any trouble with his eyes again.

The Prophet confided his Sacred Banner into the hands of Ali, armed him with his sword the Zulfiqar, and thus designated him the man whom God and His Prophet loved. He directed him to lead the assault and to fight till the Jews acknowledged submission. Ali, clad in a scarlet vest over which was buckled a cuirass of steel, issued forth with his followers and scrambling up the great stony rock in front of the fortress planted the Standard over its top, and resolved never to recede until the citadel was taken.

The Jews sallied forth to drive down the assailants. Jewish monk asked Ali his name, which he gave out as Ali b. Abi Talib or Haidar. The monk, hearing the name, warned his men that the assailant would not withdraw without capturing the citadel. However, Harith, a Jewish champion, who had vigorously repulsed the previous attacks, stepped forward and slew several of his Muslim antagonists. Perceiving this, Ali himself advanced and slew Harith, in a hand to hand fight. The brother of Harith was a man of gigantic stature and huge form. He was unequalled in valour among the Jews. To revenge the death of his brother, he came out, covered from his neck to the waist with a double coat of mail, having on his head a helmet for protection from the stroke of a scimitar. He had a huge gird on both his sides and brandished a big spear with tripleforked sharp pointed heads. Stepping forward from the Jewish lines, he challenged his adversaries to a single combat. "I am Marhab", he cried, "as all Khaibar knoweth, the greatest warrior in the world. None among the Muslims could dare come forward to confront him. Ali himself advanced from the Muslim line in response to his vainglorious challenge saying, "I am he whom his mother named Haidar, a lion of the wilderness; I weigh my foes in a gigantic balance(i.e. I make short work of my enemies.)" Ali's words were not meaningless. Ali knew, through inspiration that Marhab had lately dreamt of a rugged lion tearing him to pieces; so he reminded Marhab of the dream. The words had their effect; as when the two combatants accosted each other, Ali measured him with the eye and found him wavering. As they closed, Marhab made a thrust at Ali with his three-pronged lance, which Ali dexterously warded off, and before he could recover himself, Ali dealt him a blow with his irresistible scimitar, the Zulfiqar, which divided his buckler, passed through his head in two, through the helmet, right down to his chest or down to his saddle, as some traditions say, severing him in twain. He fell lifeless to the ground and the winner announced his victory by his usual shout, "Allah-o-Akbar," i.e. Great is the All Powerful Lord. And everyone knew that Ali was victorious.

Ali's superhuman feats of prowess

The Muslims now rushed forward in a body and there was a melee. Seven of the Jews' most distinguished warriors viz. Marhab, Antar, Rabi, Dzajij, Daud, Morra and Yasir, having fallen by Ali's sword, the Jews retreated into the citadel with the Muslims hotly in pursuit. In the heat of the battle, a Jew dealt a blow on Ali's arm knocking his shield which fell to the ground and another Jew ran away with it. Ali being enraged, performed superhuman feats of prowess, he jumped over a trench, approached the iron gate of the fortress, wrenched it off its hinges and used it as a buckler for the remainder of the battle.

Abu Rafe, one of those who stormed the fort with Ali, testified that, after the war, he examined the gate and tried with seven other persons to turn it over but the attempt failed. The citadel was captured and the victory was decisive. The Jews lost ninety-three men, while: on the Muslim side, only nineteen were killed throughout the campaign.

According to Suyuti in Tarikhul-Khulafa, Ali held the gate in one hand, making his companions stand on the flat gate, went on placing them across the ditch by a movement of his hand. Suyuti adds that later the gate could not be moved by eighty persons.

Ali's services appreciated.

After capturing the citadel Ali came back victorious to his Camp, the Prophet, seeing him coming, came out of his tent with open arms to receive him. Warmly embracing Ali, the Prophet kissed his brow and declared that his services to the Divine cause were appreciated by the Almighty Judge as well as by himself and added.

¹ "Ali, had I not been afraid that the Muslims would start regarding you as Christians regard Christ, I would have said things about you which would have made the Muslims venerate you and to consider the dust of your feet as something worth venerating; but it will suffice to say that you are from me and I am from you; you will inherit me and I will inherit you; you are to me what Aaron was unto Moses; you will fight for my causes, you will be nearest to me on the day of judgment; you will be next to me on the fountain of Kauser; enmity against you is enmity against me; a war against you is a war against me; your friendship is my friendship; to be at peace with you is to be at peace with me; your flesh is my flesh; your blood is my blood; who will obey you will obey me; truth is on your tongue, in your heart and in your mind. You have as much faith in God as I have. You are a door to me. As per the order of God, I give you these tidings that your friends will be rewarded in Heaven and your enemies are doomed for Hell".

Ali shed tears of joy at this intelligence. The Apostle revived their faith by the example of Ali on whom he bestowed the surname of the "Lion of God". Gibbon, D. & F. of Roman Empire Vol. V. p. 365.

¹ Yanabi-al-Mowaddat (Bombay Edition, page 107).

Surrender of the Jews.

After the defeat, the fortress surrendered on condition that the inhabitants were free to leave the country after giving up their whole property to the conqueror, each one taking a camel load of food stuffs with him. Concealment of the valuables was to be deemed an infraction of the conditions, and the violator was liable to capital punishment. People preferring to live in the country might occupy and reside in the houses possessed by them and might also cultivate the land they occupied; but no immoveable property was to be owned by them, they being treated as tenants bound to cede half of their products to the conqueror, who could put them to exile at his will and pleasure.

The Massacre of The Bani Khuzaa.

By virtue of the Hudaibiya Treaty, the Bani Khuzaa had declared themselves in alliance with the Prophet. With all the tribes in and around o Medina knowing the strength of the Muslims, the Holy Prophet might have hoped for a peaceful year to come, but it was not to be, because the Meccans had no intention of keeping to the terms of the treaty. As the first year of the treaty drew to a close, the Meccan Quraish violated it in a most ruthless manner. At their direct instigation the tribe of Bani Bakr invaded the Bani Khuzaa, pillaged their territory and massacred them. Those who escaped the massacre fled to Medina and sought the Prophet's help and a redress of their grievances. The Holy Prophet came to the conclusion that the time to put an end to this rule of iniquity and oppression that prevailed at Mecca was long overdue. To the people of Bani Khuzaa the Prophet made a promise that he would take up their cause as his very own.

He ordered an army of ten thousand to get ready to take the field against the Meccans. It was at this stage that Abu Sufyan, the Governor of Mecca realising the gravity of the danger, came to Medina to seek the Prophet's forgiveness. The Holy Prophet knew Abu Sufyan too well to waver in his determination, having lost all faith in the Meccans.

March on Mecca.

On the 10th Ramazan, 8 A. H. or the 1st January 630 A. D. Muhammad took the road to Mecca with a fully equipped army of ten thousand strong, and marched in all haste towards the Holy City of Mecca. The Muslim army continued its unopposed march to Marr-uz-Zuhraan, within sight of Mecca. Here they were ordered to camp and to await developments, and they were permitted to light camp fires. Soon the heights were ablaze with a thousand fires, and the Meccans who had not received any tidings of the impending danger, were struck with terror at this sight.

Realising that Islam could no longer be prevented from spreading, Abu Sufyan sought to save his skin by a profession of the faith. The Holy Prophet did not trust him any more than at the time of Ohad. Hence he did not expose his army to any surprise move on the part of the Meccans. He ordered his forces to surround the city and to enter from four different points. To Ali, who commanded a large body of cavalry, was confided the Sacred Banner, which he was to plant on Mount Hajun, and which he was to maintain there until the Prophet joined him.

Express orders were given to all Generals to practise forbearance, and under no circumstances make the first attack. The main body of the army advanced without molestation. Muhammad brought up the rearguard, clad in a scarlet vest, and riding on his favourite camel A 1-Qaswa. He proceeded slowly, his movements being impeded by the immense multitude which thronged around him. Arriving at Mount Hajun, where Ali had planted the Standard of the Faith, he had a tent pitched for himself. Here he alighted, put off his Scarlet garment, and assumed the black turban and the pilgrim's garb.

Not long after this, accompanied by Ali, he proceeded direct to the sanctuary of Kaaba, kissed the sacred stone, performed the seven circuits round the sanctuary, and offered his devout prayers.

The city was at his mercy, but history does not afford a similar example of the magnanimous generosity and forbearance which was displayed by Muhammad. "What can you expect at my hands?" He asked them. "Mercy", they replied. Tears came into the eyes of the Prophet when he heard them beg for mercy. "I will speak to you", he continued, "as Joseph spoke to his brethren. I will not reproach you today. God will forgive you, for He is merciful and loving. Go; ye are free!" can anything be more sublime than this? (Eternal Peace be upon him and his Holy Progeny).

There were three hundred and sixty symbols around the Kaaba representing the pagan Arab Gods. The Prophet pointed to each with his staff whilst reciting the verse, "Truth has come and falsehood being perishable has vanished" and the symbols fell on their faces. Pictures of Abraham and Ishmael and of the angels in female form, which covered the walls of the Kaaba were obliterated. Hobal the Symbol treated as the greatest deity of Mecca, was fixed on a high position beyond reach. To destroy it, the Prophet desired Ali to mount on his shoulders. Ali hesitated for a moment. "Do as you are told" reiterated the voice of the Master. Ali then got up on the Holy Prophet's shoulders and completed the destruction. He threw down all the symbols, replica of the "Age of Ignorance", and then jumped down from the shoulders of his Master. Then the Prophet asked Ali, "how did you feel when you were mounting my shoulders?" To this Ali replied, "While there I found that my hand reached to a height as high as Heaven, and that I could remove whatever I wanted with ease." The Holy Prophet replied, "O Ali! I congratulate you on performing a Divine duty, and lucky am I indeed that I held the Divine burden on my shoulders." The Holy Prophet's order to Ali to mount on his shoulders was nothing but a Divine Revelation which signified that Ali was a partner in this Divinely ordained Command of the Lord.

The Bani Jazhima.

The Bani Jazhima, who lived at a day's march from Mecca, had already embraced Islam, but none of them had turned up to pay respects to the Prophet at Mecca. The Prophet deputed Khalid with a small detachment to enquire, with definite instructions not to provoke a struggle. Khalid secretly rejoiced to get this commission which afforded him a chance to take revenge for the murder of his uncle some years ago at the hands of the Jazhimites. Revenge he did take by ordering the execution of some of them.

The Prophet, grieved at receiving the sad news of the outrage, raised up his hands to Heaven and called God to witness that he was innocent of what Khalid had done. On his return, when Khalid was upbraided, he shifted the blame to Abd-al-Rahman, but the Prophet indignantly rejected the imputation.

Accordingly, the Holy Prophet sent Ali with a sum of money for distribution among the people to compensate for the bloodshed, and to restore to them what Khalid had wrested from them. The generous Ali executed the

commission faithfully. Inquiring into the losses and sufferings of each individual, Ali paid as much compensation as they demanded. When all blood was atoned for and all the sufferers were satisfied, he distributed the remaining money among them, gladdening every heart by his bounty. The Prophet applauded this generosity, praised and thanked Ali. Khalid was rebuked and reproved.

The Battle of Hunain. 8 A. H.

The formidable Bedouin tribes, the Hawaazin, the Thakif and various others pastured their flocks on the territories bordering Mecca. Some of them possessed strongly fortified towns like Tayef, and were unwilling to render obedience to the Muslims without resistance. They formed a league with the intention of overwhelming Muhammad before he could make preparations to repulse their attack.

The threatening information compelled the Prophet to cut short his stay in Mecca. He left Mecca with his ten thousand followers, who had come with him from Medina, and two thousand from Mecca who had volunteered to fight by his side. Ali as usual, held the Sacred Standard of the Prophet. In the dead of night the army reached the Hunain valley, which lies about midway between Mecca and Tayef. In order to reach the fertile valley of Tayef, they had to pass through a narrow defile called Hunain. This was the key point of the enemy's defence. It was a narrow and dismal place leaving little room for an army to pass through, except in single file, nor could camels and horses be manoeuvred within its narrow walls. Concealing themselves under the precipitous side of the rocky valley, the tribesmen, from the heights, showered avalanches of rocks and arrows on the Muslims, and prevented all attempts by the Muslim cavalry to organise a charge. Panic began to spread amongst the Muslim troops and defeat seemed very probable. All except the Holy Prophet, Ali, Abbas and a few others started to run and panic seized the whole army. According to Habib-us-Siyar and Rouzath-ul-Ahbab, Khalid Bin Walid was the first to leave the field. As they ran helter skelter, the Holy Prophet called out to them, "Where are you going ? The Apostle of the Lord is here! Return! Return! Where are you going? The Apostle of the Lord is here ! Return! Return!"

At this critical moment Ali rallied the disorganised forces around him inspiring them to fight with fresh valour. At the same time the Holy Prophet asked his uncle Abbas, who held his mule, to call aloud at the top of his voice:

"O citizens of Medina! O men of the Treaty of Fealty (alluding to those who took the oath under the tree at Hudaibiya)! O Ye of the Sura Baqar (reminding them of their paying homage at the time of embracing Islam)! The stentorian voice of Abbas, as he repeatedly called aloud, was heard by the fleeing columns and it was answered with Labbaik (we are coming) from all sides and the men began to return. About a hundred men, all Ansars* (Abul Fida ; Ibn Hisham), gaining the narrow Pass, checked the advance of the enemy. The standard bearer of the enemy, a man of extraordinarily tall stature and stout built, came forward and challenged the Muslims to single combat. As usual, Ali stepped forward and engaged him and within a short time put an end to him. Now both the parties closed with each other and a hand to hand fight ensued. The conflict was terrible. The Prophet, who was watching the struggle from an eminence, taking a handful of gravel, cast it towards the enemy saying, "Ruin seize them". The enemy became panicky within a short time and finally took to flight, chased by the Muslims, and many of them were killed. The battle was won. The enemy, lost seventy of their bravest, of whom forty fell under the sword of Ali.

As a result of this victory, enormous booty fell into the hands of the Muslims. The battle of Hunain, is one of the most famous events in the history of Islam. It was notable for the strategy of Ali regrouping the Muslim army, turning defeat into victory. It also showed the clemency with which the prisoners were treated. Six hundred of the enemy were freed without having to pay ransom.

Mention of this battle has been made in the Holy Quran vide Sura IX-25 and 26.

25 "Already hath God helped you in many engagements,

and on the day of Hunain when you prided yourself on your numbers, it availed you nothing. The earth became too strait for you although it was widely large, then did ye turn your backs in flight."

26 ("Then God sent down His tranquillity upon His Apostle and upon the faithful and sent down hosts (troops of angels) invisible to you ; and chastised those who disbelieved, and that is the reward of the ungodly."

Operations against the People of Al-Tayef. S A. H.

After the battle of Hunain, Malik ibn Auf, fled to Tayef where he was given asylum. The people of Tayef were formidable warriors who worshipped an idol called Allat, and attributed all their success to him. It was the Prophet's desire to destroy this idol, and prove to the people of Tayef that only God was to be worshipped. Hence a force was sent to lay siege to Tayef.

The warriors of Tayef proved their mettle, and resolved to fight to a finish against the Muslim assaults, and they replied with counter assaults, until the casualties among the Muslims started piling up. When the Muslims laid waste their vineyards and date palms, they offered formidable resistance and refused to surrender.

Finally the Holy Prophet decided to send Ali to Tayef with an invitation to the people to accept Islam. On his arrival in the territories bordering on Tayef, Ali began to destroy the pagan symbols whenever he came across one. This greatly incensed the local tribesmen, men of the Banu Khusham, who were feudatories of the Tafefites. In a skirmish with them Ali killed their formidable leader, Shahab. This caused panic amongst the forces of the Banu Khusham, who surrendered. Other feudatories of Tayef, the men of Hawazan and the Banu Thakeef were also quickly defeated by Ali, who marched on to Tayef, where he found its people now anxious to surrender. A deputation of the people of Tayef then went to the Holy Prophet to pray for forgiveness and to ask permission to enter the Islamic fold.

The deputation asked the Holy Prophet to give them short respite for the continued worship of their symbols, begging first for one year's grace then for six months, and finally for just a month. The Holy Prophet rejected their request emphatically. "Then" said they, "Exempt us from the five daily prayers". The Holy Prophet replied, "Faith without prayers is no faith at all". As a last appeal they said, "Give us exemption from Zakat (the obligatory tax)". The Holy Prophet said to them, "You have to observe prayers and fasting and to pay the obligatory tax if you accept Islam. These are all articles of Faith, and can never be dispensed with. And should you deviate a hair's breadth from the Commands of God, I will send you a man, like me in all respects and he will put you to the sword, and ignominious will be your lot". Then the Holy Prophet caught hold of Ali's hand and said, "Verily he is the man who will do this job".

Ali inspired with Divine Secrets.

During the period when the army was sitting round the besieged town of Tayef, the Prophet sent out a detachment under the command of Ali to invite the tribes inhabiting the vicinity of Tayef, to embrace Islam. Ali had some encounters, especially the Khotham clan offered opposition but after their chief named Shabab was slain by Ali, they submitted. When Ali returned after faithfully and successfully executing his mission, the Prophet on seeing him exclaimed 'Allaho Akbar' and took him alone to his sacred apartment to have a long and confidential talk with him. His companions¹ began to murmur, wondering why the Prophet so long engaged Ali in a secret conference, not allowing others to be present. Hearing this, the Prophet said that God Himself had inspired Ali with Divine Secrets, and it was for this reason that he was engaged in confidential discourse so long.

Wadi-al-Ramal or Zhat-al-Salasal Expedition.

In the year 9 A.H., the Prophet received intelligence that the tribes inhabiting the Wadi-al-Ramat valley contemplated a raid upon Medina, and that they were collecting arms and men for the purpose. The valley was surrounded on all sides by hills and thorny bushes and trees which served as ambuscade. Two expeditions failed due to the difficult terrain which was an asset to the enemy to ambush the Muslims.

At last, the Prophet despatched Ali at the head of an army. Ali, at the start, took another direction and after some stages turned suddenly towards his destination through a rugged tract, marching by night and halting for rest in the day. His companions protested against the dangers of the route, but Ali paid no heed to them and proceeded on. At length one morning he surprised the enemy and ravaged the valley, avenging the loss they had inflicted upon the preceding expeditions.

¹ Habib-al- Siyar; Maar ij-al-Nabawat; Kanz-al-Ummal.

¹ The Prophet received a revelation as contained in Sura C of the Quran and he announced the glad tidings of Ali's victory to his Companions. When Ali was coming back victorious, the Prophet went out with his followers to

receive him. Seeing the Prophet, Ali got down from his horse, but the Prophet bade him remount, and told him his services were approved by God and His Prophet. On hearing this Ali wept with joy.

This expedition is known as Zhat-al-Salasal expedition. which is related by some historians as having taken place in the year 8 A.H.

Operations against the Banu Zubuda.

Banu Zubuda was a clan living to the west of Medina. and had accepted Islam. Their leader was a warrior known as Omar bin Kurb. Omar had a feud with another warrior of the same clan named Ushus Khusee, who had killed his father. Anxious to avenge his father's death, Omar took Ushus prisoner and desired to slay him. The matter went up to the Prophet for arbitration. The Holy Prophet decreed that after the acceptance of Islam, the seeking of revenge for the blood of relatives, which had become a system during the time before Islam, did not now arise. This decision upset Omar so much that he renounced Islam. Omar then killed Harrih Ibn Kaab, the chief of a tribe which had become a feudatory to Islam. This killing of an ally of the Muslims could not be tolerated by the Holy Prophet.

He deputed Ali to lead a force against the Banu Zubuda. Before the general battle began, Omar came out and challenged Ali to a single combat. At this Ali, 'The Lion of God', came thundering out of the ranks, and chanting verses in which he glorified the valour of the Muslim heroes, struck such awe in the heart of the adversary that he fled from the battlefield. This left the tribe of Banu Zubuda without a leader, and they promptly took to flight. Ali pursued them, took several of them prisoners and returned to Medina in triumph.

¹ Kashfal Ghamma.

The Tabuk expedition, and the appointment of Ali as Governor of Medina.

In the middle of 9 A.H. 631 A.D. news reached the Prophet that the Roman Emperor Heracles was mobilising a huge army to surprise the Muslims at Medina. Receiving this intelligence, the Prophet resolved to meet the enemy on their way, and issued explicit orders to his men to make preparations for the expedition. The Holy Prophet appointed Ali, his Vicegerent, as Governor of Medina. Besides commanding the Medina garrison, Ali was to officiate at prayers and to perform all those duties that had hitherto devolved on the Holy Prophet. In addition to maintaining law and order, he was also required to look after the Prophet's household, a duty which more than all others epitomised the love and trust in which he was held by his beloved Master. He accepted the trust with great reluctance, having been accustomed always to accompany the Prophet and share all his perils.

After the departure of the Holy Prophet, rumours began to circulate to the effect that Ali had been deliberately left behind because the Prophet had been apprehensive about the dangers of the Tabuk expedition. These rumours were started by one of the leaders of the hypocrites, Abdullah ibn Ubay, an old enemy of Islam since the days of Badr. To a man of Ali's nature, accusations of cowardice were more than could be borne. Stung by this suggestion, Ali hastened after the Prophet, overtaking him on the road to Tabuk and informed him of the various rumours prevailing in Medina. The Holy Prophet managed to pacify Ali and spoke thus : "These men are liars. They are the party of the Hypocrites and Doubters, who would breed sedition in Medina. I left thee behind to keep watch over them, and to be a guardian to both our families." ¹ I would have thee to be what Aaron was to Moses; excepting that thou canst not be like him, a Prophet; I being the last of the Prophets." The Holy Prophet also explained to Ali that although Abu Sufyan had embraced Islam, the danger of an intrigue at Medina was still so great, that only Ali would be able to curb the mischievous designs of the enemies within the city.

Ali left post-haste for Medina where he sought out the house of Abdullah Ibn Ubay and dragging him outside proceeded to give him a bit of his mind. Though the Holy Prophet had been lenient in his dealings with the Hypocrites, Ali made it very clear to them that he would not tolerate their double-dealings. He believed in harsher measures and he made it abundantly clear, that, as long as he was in charge of Medina, he would neither brook any insult nor endure any form of intimidation.

Announcement of Sura Baraat

² The pilgrims at the annual pilgrimage 'to Mecca were for the most part heathens, who mingled idolatrous practices with the holy rites, and the Prophet had hitherto abstained from being present at these ceremonies, and contented himself with the Lesser Pilgrimage or Umra as in previous years. The sacred season of the year 9 A.H. was now drawing near. By this time the Prophet had received a revelation forbidding the unrighteous to perform the pilgrimage after this year, as mentioned in the opening verses of Sura IX of the Quran. The Prophet therefore

deputed Abubakr to proceed on pilgrimage to Mecca, in order to promulgate the revelation to the Pilgrims. Three hundred Muslims accompanied Abubakr and twenty camels were given to him to be sacrificed on behalf of the Prophet.

¹ Suyuti.

² Abut Fida; Tarikh-al-Khamis.

Shortly after the departure of Abubakr, the Prophet received Command from God, and in obedience to the Command, he despatched Ali ¹ on his swiftest camel, the Al-Ghadzba, with orders to overtake the caravan and to take back the book (Verses of Sura IX) from Abubakr. and to proceed himself with it to announce it to the pilgrims at Mecca.

Ali overtook the caravan at Araj, and taking the book from Abubakr proceeded to Mecca. Abubakr returned dejected to Medina and asked the Prophet whether he being replaced by Ali for conveying the revelation to the people of Mecca was based on any Command of God!

The Prophet answered that he had a revelation from God to the effect, that, "I should not depute anyone for this proclamation except myself or someone from me. Ali is from me and I am from him. He is my Brother, my Vicegerent, the Executor of my will, and he is my Successor and performs all those duties that devolve on me."

According to Hishami the Prophet answered that he had a revelation to the effect that none should deliver the revelation to the people but he himself or a man of his family, or (according to Tirmizhi and Nasai) that none should deliver it to the people but he himself or Ali.

Reaching Mecca, Ali read aloud, towards the close of the Pilgrimage, on the great Day of Sacrifice, to the vast concourse of the pilgrims, the recitation of the passage of the Quran. Having finished it, he continued: "I have been ordered to explain to you, (1) that no one shall hence forward make the circuits of the Holy House in a state of nakedness, (2) that any treaty, made by anyone with the Prophet, shall remain in force till its termination, that four months of liberty are allowed to all, after which the obligation devolving on the Prophet will cease, (3) that no unbeliever will enter Paradise, (4) that the unrighteous must not come on Pilgrimage after this year.

¹ Tirmizhi; Ahmad Hanbal; tabari; Alamin-al-wara; Task Mo'alim-al-Tanzil; Abul Fida.

Operations against the Banu Tay-Spring 630 A.D.

The tribe of Banu Tay was instigated by its priests to defy the authority of the Holy Prophet. One of the chiefs of this famous tribe was the illustrious Hatim, whose prodigious achievements had passed into the classics of oriental literature. Poets and minstrels had sung the tales of Hatim's generosity and munificence, and his romantic tales fill the pages of many oriental books to which people revert for pastime and pleasure. Hatim had died some time before this insurrection, and when the leadership fell on his son Abi, the Banu Tay had a chief who equalled his father in the performance of charitable deeds.

As a warrior Abi was lacking in valour, for when the Holy Prophet sent a force under Ali to quell the rebellion, Abi fled to Syria, leaving behind his sister Sufana and his clansmen to their fate. Ali took them prisoner and sent them to Medina where the Prophet set Sufana at liberty. She refused however to accept her freedom, saying, "O Apostle of God! My father is dead, and when your army approached our territory, my brother and other relations took to flight to save their skins. My father was an illustrious chief known as Hatim Tay, and was famous for his munificence. He used to ransom prisoners, feed the poor and needy, protect the honour of women, and console the sick and the afflicted. I am daughter of that chief who would never have accepted liberty unless the men of his tribe were also released." "O young lady" said the Holy Prophet, "I accede to your request, and set all your tribesmen free. There is no doubt that your father had all the virtues of a Muslim." The Holy Prophet bestowed precious gifts on Hatim's daughter and sent her away with all honour and respect.

When Sufana went to Syria, she appraised her brother Abi, the wonderful bounty granted out to her by the Prophet of Islam. Upon hearing the wonderful details of Sufana's stay in Medina, a strange longing overcame Abi to meet the Holy Prophet. He hastened to Medina and threw himself at the feet of the Holy Prophet and accepted Islam. This was the signal for the rest of his clan to embrace Islam. In the subsequent wars, the people of Banu Tay remained steadfast in the faith and rendered valiant services to the cause of Islam.

CHAPTER VII:

MUBAHALA (Maledictory Conflict)

Towards the close of the ninth year of Hegira, embassies from all parts of Arabia came uninterruptedly to the Holy Prophet at Medina, to profess Islam and to declare the adherence of their tribes to Prophet Muhammad. (Mention is made in the Holy Quran about this in Sura CX ANN ASR) (The Help).

Uptill now, the Christians of Najraan (a city in the province of Yemen) had kept themselves aloof. The Holy Prophet sent a letter, inviting them to embrace Islam. In response to that letter the Christians counselled among themselves as to what their course of action should be and ultimately sent a representative deputation of fourteen members to Medina to study the facts pertaining to the Prophet of Islam and his Mission. The deputation was headed by three scholars of repute. These were Abdul Maseeh Aaqib, Sayeed and Abdul Haris.

When these deputies reached Medina, they changed their clothes which they had worn on the journey, dressed themselves in silken garments, put rings of gold on their fingers and went to the mosque to greet the Prophet. All of them greeted the Prophet traditionally, but the Apostle of God did not respond and turned his face away from them. They left the mosque and approached Osman and Abdul Rahman Ibn Auf, complaining "your Apostle wrote to us and invited us, but when we went to see him and wished him, he neither reciprocated our wishes nor replied to us. Now what do you advise us to do? Should we go back or wait for another opportunity?" Osman and Abdul Rehman could not comprehend the situation. At last they took r deputationists to Ali, who advised them to remove the clothes of silk and the rings of gold that they were wearing and to put on their priestly robes. The Holy Prophet would then willingly see them. Thereupon the Christian delegates changed into humble garments and presented themselves to the Apostle who then responded to their salutations and said, "By the Lord who has appointed me His Messenger, when they first came to me they were accompanied by Satan".

Thereafter the Apostle preached to them and requested them to accept Islam. They asked, "What is your opinion about Jesus Christ?" The Apostle said, "You may rest today in this city and after being refreshed you will receive the replies to all your questions from me." The Apostle was awaiting a revelation in this matter, and the next day the verses of the Holy Quran Sura 3 (A I-E-Imraan) verses 58-59-60 were revealed to him to show the true nature of Jesus Christ.

Verses 58 and 59 read as follows :

"Surely the likeness of Jesus is with Allah as the likeness of Adam;
He created him from dust, then said to him 'Be', and he was.
This is the truth from your Lord, so be not one of the disputers."

When they reappeared before the Holy Prophet, he informed them of the above verses, explaining that Jesus Christ was a Prophet like Adam, he was created from dust and therefore could not be the son of God. After this, the Holy Prophet invited them to embrace Islam. The Christians would not agree and refused to be convinced. Thereupon the following verse No. 60 from Sura 3 was revealed :-

"If anyone disputes in this matter with thee, now after (full) knowledge hath come to thee say: Come! Let us gather together, our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves; Then let us earnestly pray and invoke the curse of God on those who lie!"

The unexampled sinlessness and purity of Ali and his family was clearly proved by their selection for the contest out of the entire community of the Muslims.

When the Holy Prophet had informed the deputation of what had been revealed to him by God, he again urged them to accept Islam. As they did not believe his words, he challenged them to a 'Mubahala'. 'Mubahala' means a 'maledictory conflict', and is derived from its Arabic root 'bahlah' meaning 'Curse'. So literally 'Mubahala' means cursing one another. After private consultations, the Christians agreed to the challenge.

At the appointed time and place, when the Christians saw that not only Muhammad, but his daughter Fatima, his son-in-law Ali, and his grandsons Hasan and Husain, (styled as the Holy Panjetan) also came out for this maledictory conflict, they were dismayed and overwhelmed. "Verily I see a divine light on the face of our combatants," said the leader of the deputation to his fellow-priests. "Truth shines in their eyes, I am sure that should they pray for anything, God would hearken to their solicitations, and even move mountains if they ask for it. I sincerely advise you to refrain from this 'Mubahala'. To invoke the curse of God with people like these is to invite

sure death."

Having thus changed their minds, they went to the Holy Prophet and informed him of their inability to proceed with the contest. The Holy Prophet again extended to them the invitation to accept Islam. The Christians replied, "We have not the conviction of your faith, nor the strength to fight against you. Let us make a compromise and come to terms." At last a treaty was signed by which the Christians of Najraan agreed to pay annual tribute to the Muslims, in the shape of two thousand garments of the value of forty Dirhems each, thirty camels and thirty horses, thirty coats of arms, and thirty lances, every year.

Authentic Proofs. are quoted below regarding the Ayat of the Holy Quran-Sura 3-verse 60 as given on page 73 Imam Fakhruddin Razi writes in his 'Tafseer-e-Kabeer' (Volume 2) : "When this verse was revealed to the Holy Prophet, the Christians of Najraan accepted the challenge of 'Mubahala' and the Holy Prophet took along with him Imam Hasan, Imam Husain, Janab-e-Fatima and Hazrat Ali to the field of 'Mubahala' ". Alama Zamakhshari writes in his 'Tafseer-e-Kashshaf' : "There can be no more authentic and stronger evidence for the holiness of Ashah-e-Kisa, i.e., Hazrat Ali, Janab-e-Fatima, Imam Hasan and Imam Husain, than this Quranic verse. For in compliance with the order of God, the Holy Prophet summoned his Ahl-ul-Bait, took Imam Husain in his arms, grasped Imam Hasan's hand in his own, asked Janab-e-Fatima to follow him, and Hazrat Ali to follow her. This proved that the Holy Ahl-ul-Bait were those to whom the Quranic verse was directed."

Saad Ibne Waqqas relates : "When this verse was revealed, the Holy Prophet sent for Hazrat Ali, Janab-e-Fatima, Imam Hasan and Imam Husain, and prayed to God thus: "O my God! These are the very Ahl-ul-Bait of mine." (Sahih Muslim, volume 1, Sahih Tirmizi)

It is maintained by the generality of Muslims that only these members of the Prophet's house comprised of his permanent or unchangeable family, whom the Prophet loved dearly and who were distinguished from the rest of the Muslim world, on account of their having been declared purified by God as sinless and faultless in the revelation contained in Sura XXXIII-33, "It has always been the Will of Allah to keep off from you all stigma (of sin, ignorance and disbelief), O people of the house, and to purify you with the most perfect purification." This verse is meant as a guarantee and a reassurance regarding the purity of the Ahl-ul-Bait, so that all Muslims should recognise their excellence.

CHAPTER VIII: **MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN YEMEN**

In 632 A.D. the Holy Prophet deputed Ali to undertake the task of propagating Islam in Yemen. For six months Khalid bin Walid laboured in vain to bring the Yemenites to accept Islam. These people were proud of their heritage and culture, and took the greatest pride in their traditions and institutions. The Jewish and Christian colonies around Yemen were notable for their scholars who were well read in the scriptures and were an authority in matters of religion.

Before Ali left, the Holy Prophet personally inspected the three hundred Mujahirs and Ansar volunteers, who had gathered at Qoba, near Medina, to accompany Ali, and presented "The Lion of God" with a black Standard. He then tied a turban on Ali's head with his own hands saying to him, "Now proceed to Yemen and preach among its inhabitants the divine laws of Islam. - You have to enlighten the people in the Commandments of God as revealed in the Holy Quran, to teach them the methods of prayers and extend to them the invitation to accept Islam." As Ali made ready to leave, the Holy Prophet said, "I swear by God that one conversion at your hands is far nobler and better for Islam than all the wonders of nature on which the Sun rises and sets."

Ali proceeded to Yemen, and there read the Prophet's letter to the people and delivered his sermon according to the dictates of the Prophet, preaching the doctrines of Islam to the multitudes, with the result that the entire tribe of Hamadanis embraced Islam in a single day. (Ibn Athir, Kamil V. II).

Ali proved as good a preacher as he was a swordsman, and his Mission to Yemen saw his emergence as a religious scholar of the first order. The Christian priests and the Jewish Rabbis who had settled in Yemen held daily discourses with him on religious doctrines and dogmas, and Ali's illuminating sermons on the Unity of God and the Islamic exposition of the values of life made a great impression on those who heard him. After one of his sermons, the Christian priest Ka'b accepted Islam. Ka'b was a distinguished scholar and critic, renowned for his piety and learning. His example was soon followed by many others and soon many Rabbis followed suit. Other neighbouring tribes also embraced Islam, and it clearly proved that "The exposition of Islam and the tongue of Ali were co-related like hand and glove, or like a soul in a body."

CHAPTER IX:

THE FINAL PILGRIMAGE OF THE HOLY PROPHET AND THE LAST DECLARATION AT GHADIR-E-KHUM

It was in the month of Zilhajj 10 A.H. when the Holy Prophet becoming intuitively aware of his approaching end, decided to make a farewell Pilgrimage to Mecca. As the time for the Pilgrimage approached, he started to make preparations for the journey. Hazrat Ali who was in Yemen was asked to complete his work and join the Prophet in Mecca.

The Prophet reached Mecca on Sunday the 4th of Zilhaji 10 A.H. Soon after his arrival, Ali, who hastened back from Yemen ahead of his men, joined the Prophet, who was very glad to see him and affectionately embracing him asked what vow he had taken for the pilgrimage. Ali replied, "I have taken upon me a vow to perform the same pilgrimage as the Prophet, whatever that might be, and I have brought thirty-four camels for the sacrifice". The Prophet joyfully exclaimed, 'Allah-o-Akbar', (Great is the Lord), and said he had brought sixty-six. He added, that in all the rites of the Pilgrimage, as well as in the sacrifice, he (Ali) would be his partner. Thus Ali also performed the Greater Pilgrimage along with the Prophet.

Before completing the rites of the Pilgrimage, the Holy Prophet addressed the assembled multitude from the top of the Jabal-ul-Arafat in words which yet live in the hearts of Muslims. As the various ceremonies were to be treated as models for future guidance, the Prophet observed rigorously each rite, whether in compliance with revelations or in accordalce with the patriarchal usage. Thus, when the hundred camels were to be sacrificed, they were offered by him and Ali conjointly. A repast, prepared from the meat of the sacrificed camels was served, the Prophet sat down with no other but Ali to partake of it. The ceremonies of the pilgrimage ended with shaving of the heads and paring of the nails after the sacrifice of animals. The pilgrim's garb was then removed and Ali, who rode on the Prophet's Duldul, proclaimed that the restrictions of Pilgrimage were over.

The Sermon at Ghadir-E-Khum and the Last Declaration

Bidding farewell to his native city of Mecca, the Prophet set out for Medina on the 14th Zilhajj, 10 A.H., accompanied by the same congregation of Muslims.

Now as his swift camel sped on with its long swinging strides, a life of tireless toil was nearing its end, a mission of mercy and devotion was approaching its culmination and the seeds of Divine dispensation were about to begin to bear fruit. His mien and bearing showed the signs of sublime peace, coupled with an overwhelming sense of gratitude and an insatiable yearning for his Creator and Cherisher.

Yet on close scrutiny, his serene features could not have failed to disclose the signs of deep contemplation as if he was weighing the pros and cons of some momentous decision.

What could be the cause of this restlessness? Had he not accomplished all that he had set his mind to do? The Unity and Justice of God had been convincingly instilled into the hearts of men; the belief in the angels, the Scriptures, the Prophets, the resurrection of the dead, and the Day of Judgment had all been authoritatively expounded.

But with the meticulous thoroughness of his genius, Prophet Muhammad realised that the most important part of his task still remained unfulfilled, and it was this which made him restless at the moment of his greatest triumph. He saw that the sands of time were running out and the cup of his life was filled almost to the brim. This being so, the most important task was to ensure the continuity of his life's work by someone endowed with all the moral values which he had upheld, or else all his miraculous achievements during the twenty-three years of his apostolic ministry stood in danger of being irretrievably undone. It was a matter of prime importance that Divine guidance should continue after him and that the Divine sovereignty should be exercised by the chosen ones of God, to be appointed by the Prophet.

He had already designated his Ahl-ul-Bait on several occasions, as the Ark of Noah, the strong rope of God, the door of forgiveness, the purified ones, and made the love of these holy ones incumbent upon his followers. He had similarly, on many occasions, pointed out Ali as "My brother and Successor", "The door of the city of knowledge", "The most equitable judge", "The embodiment of faith", and having the position in relation to himself as "Aaron was to Moses".

Were these pronouncements in the course of time going to be forgotten, misinterpreted or ignored by his followers after him? Could the Prophet allow them to be set aside by power-seekers? He knew that he had to make a final and unchallengeable declaration regarding his successor. The choice of the appropriate moment, however, depended not on him but on Divine Inspiration. With these thoughts in his mind he marched on towards Medina.

As he arrived at Ghadir-e-Khum, suddenly the signs of a revelation appeared. The voice of Archangel Gabriel was heard saying :

"O thou esteemed Messenger, impart the guidance that has been revealed unto thee",* and in order to impress the urgency of the command, Gabriel went on to say :

"For if thou doest it not, thou hast not imparted His Message at all";
and again in the same breath to allay his fears and misgivings the angel added :
"God will protect thee from the evil designs of men". (Ch. 5 verse 67)

It is held that the Prophet had already been commanded to proclaim Ali as his successor, but he had postponed the announcement for some suitable occasion to avoid misinterpretation. ¹

* It refers to the Commandment contained in Sura xclv of the Quran, which says

1. Have We not opened thy breast for thee?
2. And put off thy burden from thee,
3. Which galled thy back?
4. And have We not raised thy name for thee?
5. Then verily, with trouble cometh ease,
6. Verily, along with trouble cometh ease;
7. And when thou art eased, set up (thy successor),
8. And turn to thy Lord with fervour.

¹ Tafsir Kabir ; Tafsir Durr-al-Manthur ; Tafsir Neshapuri; Sirat-al-Halabia.

In the 7th verse, God has commanded the Prophet to appoint his successor.

On hearing this imperious command, the Prophet made up his mind instantly. He motioned the muezzin Bilal to stop and recite the Azan with the words, "Hayya' ala Khair il'amal" (hasten towards the best of deeds). for. surely the acceptance thereof was to be a crucial event upon which the perpetuity of the Prophet's Mission depended.

As the Prophet pulled up his reins, the whole entourage came to a halt. Those who had gone ahead were summoned back and those who followed gathered round casting inquiring glances at each other. The Prophet soon dismounted and ordered his followers to clear the ground. The pebbles and thorns that lay scattered about were promptly brushed aside. Others, on receiving his express directions, began to untie the saddles from the backs of their camels, and to pile them one on top of another. so as to make a pulpit. The arrangements thus completed, the throng squatted upon the bare ground, some spreading their cloaks below to protect themselves from the burning sand, others holding up their handkerchieves to shield their eyes from the sun's glare, for it was nearly midday.

The people having clustered round the pulpit, the Prophet stepped forward and on his right was Ali, whose turban, black in colour, with its ends hanging over both of his shoulders, was arranged by the Prophet himself. Then obeying the Divine Injunction to the letter, he addressed the multitude in the following memorable words. ¹

"All praise belongs to God. In Him do I put my faith and from Him do I crave support. Him do I trust and His protection seek against the malice of our souls and evils of our deeds. The misguided have no guide save Him, and those who are guided by Him can never go astray. I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship save Him and that I, Muhammad, am His slave and Messenger."

"O ye folk, behold, the All-knowing God hath informed me that the days of my life are coming to an end and the time is fast approaching when I shall be called away from your midst towards the eternal abode. But you and I, each one of us is answerable unto God for all things are due unto Him from us. What then do you say?"

¹ Sayid Safdar Husain.

And the listeners answered, "we bear witness that thou hast done thy duty and never stinted to guide and advise its according to the Divine Will."

"Then do ye bear witness", asked the Prophet, "to the Unity of God and the Apostleship of this servant of God, who now speaks to you by His command, and do ye not hear witness that the resurrection and judgment, heaven and hell and the life hereafter are certainties?"

And they all answered, "Yea, verily Yea."

"Now then", continued the Prophet, "Listen to me carefully; I have been commanded to tell you that I will soon be taken away from your midst, but I leave unto you my Legacy of two grand precepts, each of which surpasses the other in its grandeur-God's Holy Book (The Quran) and my Ahl-ul-Bait (my irrevocable Progeny, consisting of Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain). Never shall they separate from one another until they reach me in Heaven at the Fountain of Kausar, and so long as you will adhere unto both my legacies, you will never be led astray after me. Therefore, O ye folk, it is my last Will and Testament unto you that you should always remain faithful to the Holy Quran and my Ahl-ul-Bait as true Muslims until death." By these portentous words all those who loved their teacher and benefactor were moved to tears.

And he continued, "Do not lag too far behind them and do not walk ahead of them, for in either event you will go astray. But follow them and walk in their footsteps and they will guide you along the Straight Path."

Then he asked, "Who do you think is more worthy of obedience than your souls?"

And they answered, "God and His messenger know best."

And he continued, "Lo! God is my Master, and am I not worthy of obedience from you?"

And they all said, "Yea, verily Yea."

Then the Prophet bent down and lifted up Ali in his hands, showing him to the crowds on all sides of the pulpit, and proclaimed,

علي فهذا مولاه كنت من مولاه

"Man Kunto Maulaho fa haatha Ali-yun Maulah"

"Of whomsoever I am the Master (Mania), this Ali is his Master (Maula)". So saying the Prophet raised up his hands heavenwards and prayed, "O our God, love those who will love Ali, despise those who will despise him; support those who will support him; and reject those who will reject him." ¹

¹ Suyuti has reported thus : "O God ! Befriend him who is a friend of Ali, and be an enemy to him who is an enemy to Mi."

Announcing this thrice, he got down from the raised platform, and seated Ali in a tent, where the people did him homage. Omar bin Al-Khatib was the first to congratulate Ali and to acknowledge him 'Guardian of all Believers' ¹ Saying:

"Bakhin bakhin laka ibne Abi Talib Asbahta Maulayee

Wa Maula kulla Momineen wa Mominaatin."

"Greetings be to thee O son of Abu Talib!

Thou hast dawned as my Leader and the Leader of all faithful men and women."

After the men, came all the women to congratulate Ali. At the conclusion of this installation ceremony, the Holy Prophet asked the congregation, 'Have I not truly and faithfully delivered unto you the Message?"

And they answered, "Yea, verily Yea."

Then the Prophet said, "Go now, and let those who have been present here today repeat and convey to those who are absent all that they have seen and heard."

At this moment the Divine Inspiration again descended upon our Holy Prophet with the memorable words that read, "This day have I perfected unto you your religion and completed upon you My Blessings, and I am well-pleased with Islam as your religion." (Ch. 5, Verse 3).

The tone and purpose of these two religious revelations, firstly, the verse commanding the Prophet to deliver the Message with the warning that any omission on his part would be a complete failure of his mission, and secondly, this last revelation, declaring the Lord's pleasure at the fulfilment of the task, clearly indicate that they relate to some matter of prime importance and not merely to some abstruse detail of ritual. It is only in the light of the Hadith-e-Ghadir that these two passages of the Holy Quran can be properly understood in their true importance and full significance. By consensus of the exegesis these two verses were revealed after the Prophet's last pilgrimage.

¹ Mishkat; Khasais Nasai; Rawdzat-al-Ahhab; Rawdzat-al-Sala.

Authentic Proofs

In Mishkat, a tradition of Bara'a Bin Azib and Zaid is quoted here for further clarification from the Musnad of Ahmed Ibn Hanbal : The Companions state, "We were accompanying the Apostle on his journey. When we reached the oasis of Ghadeer-e-Khum, the announcer called 'Assalato Jamia', (come to congregational prayer). The earth under the trees was swept for the Apostle. Then after the Zohar prayer was over, the Apostle held the hand of Ali Ibn Abi Talib and said, "O people! Do you know that according to every believer I am superior to his soul?" All of them replied, 'It is a fact, O Messenger of Allah! To every believer you are superior to his soul'. Then the Apostle said, 'Ali is also the Lord of him whose Lord I am. O Allah! Befriend him who befriends Ali and be alien to him who is alien to Ali.' Thereafter Omar met Ali and, said, "Hail to thee! O son of Abu Talib, today you become the Lord of all believing men and women."

Wahidee in Asbab-un-Nuzool; Suyuti in Tafseer-eDurr-i-Mansoor; Shaukani in Tafseer Fathul Qadir and Sideeq Hasan Khan in Fathul Bayan mention a tradition noted by Ibn Abi Hatim and other scholars from Abu Saeed Khudri in which it is stated that the verse "O Messenger! Make known what has been revealed unto you by your Lord and if you do not do so you have not made known your message." The Quran Ch. 5, verse 67-was revealed on the occasion of the event at Ghadir-e-Khum in honour of Ali. Moreover in another tradition which has been quoted by Aini in his annotation of Saheeh Bukharee, this verse is paraphrased as "O Messenger ! Proclaim the order which your Lord has passed and revealed unto you in honour of Ali Ibn Abu Talib." So when this verse was revealed the Apostle held Ali by his hand and said, "Ali is also Lord of him who has taken me as his Lord."

Many similar quotations are given by historians and the names of a few are mentioned below:-

Abul Fida, Ibn Khallakan in Wafiyat-ul-A'yaan; Hakim in his Mustadrak; Nasae in Kitabul Khasais; Ibn Hajar Makki in Sawa'iq-i-Muhriqa; Rawdzaat-ul-Ahbab; Naishapuri in Tafseer Gharaibul Quran, Hafiz Ibn Mardwaih and Hafiz Abu Naeem from Abu Saeed Khudri.

Muhammad Ibn Saalim Hanafi remarks in his marginal note on Sirajul Muneer-i-Azeezee, an annotation of Jam'i Sagheer of Suyuti, that when the Apostle delivered his speech "Ali is also the Lord of him who has me for his Lord, and some of the people inquired of the Holy Prophet, "Was it not sufficient for us to profess the 'Creed of evidence, say our prayers and give alms with strict regularity, that the superiority and Lordship of Abu Talib's son is now being imposed upon us? Do you commission us in this matter of your own accord, or is it ordered by Allah?" The Apostle replied, "By Him other than whom there is no one to be worshipped, this is the order of Allah".

Tafseer-o-Sa'labi, Noor-ul-Absar, Seerat-ul-Halabiyah and Mustadrak relate that when on that day a man named Haris, son of No'man Filth refused to acknowledge Ali as his leader and disputed with the Holy Prophet on this matter and said, "O Allah! If this be truly Thy Command then either rain down stones from heaven upon Muhammad or punish us." A large stone fell upon him from heaven so that he was killed, just as the army of Abraha and their elephants had been killed before.

The following verse was revealed on that occasion:

"A questioner asked for the inevitable punishment to befall the disbelievers which no one can avert". (Chapter 70 Verse 1-2.)

The great research scholar, Allama Sayed Hamid Hussain Kintoori, has written a book in two volumes called Abaqatul-Anwar on the investigation of the innumerable sources through which the Hadith-e-Ghadir has come down to us. In recent years the eminent Alim, Ayat-Ullah Shaikh Abdal Husain-al-Ameeni of Najaf has listed the names of one hundred and ten companions of the Holy Prophet who have reported this tradition as eye-witnesses and eighty-three Tab'e'in who heard it from their elders and three hundred and fifty-nine Ulema of all sects, arranged chronologically through each of the centuries since the time of the Prophet up to the present -day, who have recorded the sermon of Ghadir-e-Khum in their books and acknowledged its authenticity. Ayatullah-al-Aminis major opus 'Al-Ghadir', is a classic of erudition and painstaking research. The book establishes beyond doubt, whatever the criterion of verification adopted, the overwhelming incontrovertibility of the event of Ghadir i.e. the nomination of AIL It also firmly prescribes the injunction that if ever any tradition is to be believed, the Hadith-eGhadir holds the first claim to acceptance.

It will be readily vouched by every scholar of the Arabic language that the word 'Maula' in its meaning is far superior to the word Caliph. A Caliph is only a successor to one in any office, but a 'Maula' means the Lord and Master of everything. In using the word 'Maula' for Ali, the Apostle of God intended to convey the Divine Will that after him Ali should be held in the same position as he himself was for the people.

The Holy Quran says:

"And neither doth he speak of (his own) inclination; It (the wording) is naught but a revelation revealed (unto him)." (Chapter 53, Verse 3 and 4).

Ali was undoubtedly the chosen and declared successor of the Holy Prophet from the beginning of his Prophetic Career. Now he had the distinction of being to the Muslims what the Holy Prophet was to them; which meant that Ali was to be treated in place of (Successor to) the Prophet after his death.¹

Shah Ali Hasan Jaisi, a great celebrated Sunni Sufi, has made the meaning of the word 'MAULA' as implied in the declaration, very clear in his couplet in Persian:

عبث سو هر ميروي مولي كنت مو معني در
علي مولي پيغمبر كه معني آن به ي بومول

"Abus dar maanee-ay mun kunto Maula mee ravee hersoo, Ali Maula ba-on manee keh Paigamber boo-ood Maula".

¹ Tabari; Ibne Athir; Abul Fida, Amir Ali

Translation:

"In vain doth thou wander in all directions in interpreting the word Maula (Master),

Ali is in the same sense Maula (Master) as was the Holy Prophet Maula (Master)."
Philosophers, commentators of the Quran, poets, historians and seekers of truth all unanimously acknowledge this vital tradition as an established fact. The valley of Ghadir-e-Khum owes its fame to this single, unique and unforgettable event, on it the survival of the guidance of Islam depends, and so long as there remains a single grain of sand from that parched and arid wilderness, it will rise and proudly describe how the Prophet of Mercy once trod upon that ground, how he lifted up the worthiest of his disciples and proclaimed him as the Amir-ul-Mominin, for there was no one worthier than him and his descendants the eleven Imams, to defend, expound and propagate Islam's immortal teachings to the world.

The Holy Prophet has said :

"I am the last of the Apostles of Allah (Khatam-unNabeeyeen) O Ali, whilst you are the last of the successors to the Prophets." (Khatam-ul-Waseeyeen).

CHAPTER X:

THE DEATH OF THE HOLY PROPHET.

A few months after his Last Declaration at Ghadir-e-Khum, the Holy Prophet took ill. His malady was developing, his fever returned and his illness took a serious turn and at times he was unconscious.

The Prophet hindered to record his will

On the Thursday preceding his death, when several of his chief Companions were present in the room, the Prophet, while lying on his bed, asked for writing materials saying, "Bring me paper and ink so that I may record for you a document which will prevent your ever backsliding into error." Omar, at once interposed thus : "The man wandereth in delirium, 'God's book is sufficient for us.' A large body of the Muslims take this phrase of Omar's as a move of separation from the orthodoxy established by the Prophet, who directed all to follow the Quran and his Progeny, declaring : 'I leave unto you two grand Precepts, each of which surpasses the other in grandeur, God's Book and my Progeny; the twain will not be separated till they meet me in Paradise.' Some of those present said that the writing material should be furnished; others sided with Omar; a discussion ensued and the voices rose high to the annoyance of the Prophet. The ladies from behind the screens wished to

provide the writing materials, but Omar chided them: 'Quiet', and said, 'Ye resemble the females in the story of Joseph, when your master falleth sick ye burst into tears, and the moment he recovereth a little ye begin teasing.' The Prophet hearing this said : 'Chide them not, verily they are still much better than ye are.'¹ Now some persons proceeded to ask the Prophet what his wishes were to be recorded. But he angrily recited verse 2 of Sura XLIX (O Believers! Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet; neither speak aloud unto one another, lest your works become vain, while ye perceive aloud not) and said 'Begone, let me alone, for my present condition is better than that which ye call me to.'

Ibn Abbas lamented the irreparable loss sustained by the Muslims on this Thursday by the Prophet being hindered to record what he wished for the guidance of his followers. Remembering the incident he wept till his tears made his cheeks and beard wet.

¹ Ibn Khaldun, Tabari, Abul Fida.

The Prophet's last prayer and sermon in his mosque

The sickness of the Prophet assumed a serious turn from Saturday night and till Sunday night the fever continued unabated.

Early in the morning on Monday, the day of his death, the Prophet with his head bandaged, came out of his apartment supported by two men. After prayers, he delivered a short sermon with a voice that reached beyond the outer doors of the Mosque, which was unusually crowded with anxious people who had been seeking for the news of his health after the crisis of the preceding night. In the sermon the Prophet also said that evils were drawing near and the darkest part of asdark and tempestuous night was approaching.

The Prophet re-entered his apartment and lay down exhausted. His strength was rapidly failing.

He called Fatima, his beloved daughter and made her sit by his side and whispered something into her ear. She burst into tears. He then again whispered something to her and dried her tears with his own hands. She then appeared comforted and ¹ smiled. He then called Hasan and Husain, his dear children whom he had fondled in his lap for years, to embrace them for the last time. Hasan put his face upon the face of the Prophet, and Husain threw himself upon his breast. Both of them wept and cried so bitterly that everyone else in the room started to cry. The Prophet embraced them very affectionately, kissed them both and directed everyone present to treat them and their mother with utmost love and respect, as they were treated by himself. (It was usual with the Prophet that when he saw Fatima approaching, he always stood up, and, advancing a pace or two, received her with acclamations of joy, then kissing her hand, he used to sit in his own place.)

¹ Rawdzat-al-Ahbab; Madarij-al-Nabowat.

'Just before he breathed his last a little alter midday on 28th Safar 11 A.H. he sent for Ali ¹.

He admonished Ali to bear with patience and self control all the troubles which he would be subjected to after his death. He desired Ali to pursue with patience the right path leading to the next world even though he may find others engrossed in this world. The Prophet took Ali's head inside his own mantle, so that it covered both of them, till Ali took out his head and announced the death of the Prophet. (Life of Ali by Dar Quti wal Razi, page 739; printed at Khadimal Talim Press, Lahore; Madarij-al Nabowat.)

² Ibn Sa'd and Hakim have recorded that the Prophet breathed his last with his head on the lap of Ali. The last words spoken by the Prophet, said Ali, were "The blessed companionship on high. Prayers," ,prayers after which he stretched himself gently and then all was over.

¹ Rawdzat-al-Ahbab; Madarij-al-Nabowat;

² Saiyid Safdar Husain-The Early History of Islam. Madarij-al-Nabowat.

A Strange Scene

Meanwhile a strange scene was being enacted at the Mosque. Shortly after the Prophet's death, Omar entered the apartment and raising the sheet which covered the body, gazed earnestly on the Prophet's features, which looked as of one peacefully sleeping. Softly replacing the covering he started up and exclaimed : "The Prophet is not dead. he hath gone to his Lord as aforetime Moses did and remained forty days absent. He will yet return among us again." Brandishing his sword he exclaimed, "I will cut off the head of him who dares to say that the Prophet is dead." He was haranguing the people in a similar strain when Abubakr appeared. He listened to the words of Omar for a moment and passed on to see the prophet. He entered, and, lifting the sheet which covered the body, stooped down and kissed the forehead. Then taking the head upon his hands, he slightly lifted it and minutely scanned the features. Replacing the head gently on its pillow, he exclaimed ; "Yes! Sweet thou wert in life and sweet thou dead indeed." art in death. Alas, my Master! thou art Covering the body, he issued forth and proceeded at once to the spot where Omar was brandishing his sword and haranguing the people. "Be quiet Omar! sit thee down," cried Abubakr. But Omar would not listen to him. Turning therefore to the assemblage, he addressed them thus: "Do ye forget already the verse which was revealed to the Prophet after the battle of Ohad?"

'Muhammad is but a man with a Mission, verily other Apostles died before him; what then! If he were to die or to be killed, would ye turn upon your heels?' Again, know ye not the verse revealed to the Prophet, 'Verily O Muhammad! Thou shalt die, and verily they shall die; Verse XXXIX-31; continuing he said : 'Whosoever worshippeth Muhammad, let him know that Muhammad is indeed dead; but whosoever worshippeth God, let him know that God is immortal, He liveth and dieth not. The truth now being known, the assemblage sobbed aloud. Omar on hearing these verses, trembled and dropped down, and then he knew of a certainty that the Holy Prophet was indeed dead.

In the afternoon there appeared a friend who came running hastily to Abubakr and Omar, and informed them that many a chief of Medina had assembled at Saqifa Bani Sa'da and that they were proceeding to choose Sa'd b. Obada as their leader. "If ye have a desire to secure the Supreme Authority," said he, "ye should not lose a minute to reach thither before the matter is settled and opposition becomes dangerous." Receiving the intelligence. Abubakr and Omar hurried to Saqifa, in company with Abu Obeida and several others.

Meanwhile Ali, regardless of the movement outside was busy inside the apartment with preparation for the bathing of the Prophet's body, in company with Abbas, his two sons Fazl and Qutham, Osama and Saleh. Having closed the door of the apartment they took the body in for bathing. ¹ Ali was the only man named by the Prophet to bathe his body, (as predicted by him while he was giving the first bath to Ali at the time of his birth) as he had said that any one, other than Ali, that looked upon his nakedness, would forthwith turn-blind. So Ali bathed the body and others helped him with their eyes bandaged.

After bathing the body, they laid it out, putting on it the garments in which he died. Two sheets of fine white cloth were wound over the garment, and then it was wrapped in a sheet of striped Yemen. Then came the parties for praying over the dead body. First the relations and next to them the followers and companions of the Prophet entered the apartment in batches of ten at a time and prayed over him. Thus the body remained till the time of burial.

Opinions differed as to where the burial should take place! The matter was settled by Ali, who said that he had heard the Prophet saying, that at whatsoever spot a Prophet dies, he should be buried there. Accordingly the grave was dug, and the burial took place on the night of Tuesaay or early in the morning on Wednesday. The body was lowered into its last resting place by the same near relations who had bathed and laid it out. Ali was the last person to leave the interior of the grave, weeping bitterly. He was never seen to cry like that before or after that occasion. When -he came out of the grave, he lifted his hands in supplication and said, "Lord! He was Thy first creation, his apparent death is not a sign of his mortality, he lifted the gloom prevailing before creation started, he was the proof of Thy Glory, and was our guide towards that Realm. His soul was thb Emblem of Thy Supreme Might, his body was a master-piece of Thy Creation and his mind was Thy Treasure House."

¹ Saiyid Safdar Husain-The Early History of Islam.

CHAPTER XI:

THE HEREDITARY ENMITY BETWEEN THE HASHIMITES AND THE Umayyads

The acknowledged superiority of Hashimites over all Arab tribes in respect of their lineage, gallantry, hospitality and ethical attributes did always evoke the jealousy of Umayyads against them. And, thus, the Umayyads were constantly bent on ruining the honour and vilifying the integrity of Hashimites by all means.

Abu Hatim Sajistani writes in his book, 'Kitab-ulMuammarin' :

"One day Muawiya expressed his wish to some of his associates to meet some aged man who could describe the antiquity and past events. The people brought before him Abad Bin Amad, a man of three hundred and sixty years old, hailing from Hazramoot.' Muawiya enquired of him if he had ever seen Hashim. The old man answered, "Yes! Hashim was a man of high stature and elegant personality". He further asked him if he had also seen Umayyah. The man said, "Yes! I have seen him too. He was blind and a man of short stature and meanness was obvious on his countenance." Hearing this, Muawiya turned pale and was taken aback. Ibne Aseer, commenting upon the cause of malice between Hashimites and Umayyads, writes, "When Hashim became the heir of his father Abd-e-Manaf and inherited his fortune, the jealousy of Umayyah, the son of Abd-ush-Shams, kindled the spark of malice against Hashim forever." The gulf between Hashimites and Umayyads was widened till, in the third generation of Hashim, Hazrat Mohammad was born. Abu Sufian, the son of Harb, was the leader of Umayyads at that time who, right from the declaration of Hazrat Muhammad's prophethood till the fall of Mecca, remained the perpetual instigator behind all the wars against the Muslims and steered the vehicle of the campaign of hostility towards the Holy Prophet and his religion.

The fall of Mecca compelled Abu Sufian to embrace Islam, which he did reluctantly. After the Holy Prophet's death, he induced Hazrat Ali to rise against the Caliph in power and thus to weaken the solidarity of Islam but could not succeed in his treacherous designs. The appointment of his son Muawiya, by Hazrat Omar, as a governor of Syria in 20 A.H., lifted up the morale of the Umayyads and provided them with an opportunity to be on the rise. In the year 22 A.H. the 'Shure' Counsel elected Hazrat Osman as a Caliph. "By this time," writes Ibne Abdul Bar in 'Isteaab,' "Abu Sufian found a golden opportunity for the realisation of his dreams. He approached Hazrat Osman and addressed him in the following words:

"Osman! After Bani Taim (Hazrat Abubakr) and Bani Adi (Hazrat Omar), the Caliphate has at last come to you. So roll it like a ball wherever you wish and strengthen its foundation with your own Umayyads as this is an empire, and I do hardly have any faith in the so-called Paradise and Hell." The Historians unanimously agree with the fact that, in the reign of Hazrat Osman, all the key posts were entrusted to Umayyads throughout the whole Islamic Empire and Muawiya had secured complete domination over Syria. The exchequers (Bait-ul-Mal) of Medina and Damascus were at the disposal of Muawiya to meet his selfish ends of nepotism and diplomacy. Syria became the centre of attraction for all materialists. The mammonists were bent upon extracting their share of wealth and honour by showering upon the ruling power their utmost flattery. Muawiya harnessed these very elements to achieve his ambitious designs of vilifying and degrading the prestige of the Holy Prophet and his Progeny, and, thus, satisfied his cherished grudge and enmity between his ancestor Umayyah and Hashim.

2. Difference of Faith and Religion :

The second factor of animosity between Hashimites and Umayyads was the difference of their Faith and Religion.

Hashim and all his descendants, except Abu Lahab and his followers, were Unitarians and adhered to the faith of Abraham. On the contrary, Umayyah and his offsprings were heathens.

Ibne Jurair, Tabari and Hakim have quoted from authentic sources, "Those who changed the religion of God with infidelity were Bani Umayyah and Bani Mughairah, the two famous tribes of Quraish."

Abu Sufian as well as the other members of Umayyads were, therefore, the deadliest enemies of the Holy Prophet and continued their greatest endeavours to uproot Islam as long as it was possible. They remained subdued as long as the Holy Prophet lived. But the spark of their animosity against Hashimites which was buried in the ashes of their diplomacy, was rekindled after the demise of the Holy Prophet, and the descendants of Abu Sufian availed a golden opportunity to realise their long-cherished dream.

"The persecutors of Muhammad," says Gibbon, "usurped the inheritance of his children and the champions of idolatry became the supreme heads of his religion and Empire. The opposition of Abu Sufian had been fierce and obstinate, his conversion was tardy and reluctant; his new faith was fortified by necessity and interest." In malice, jealousy and animosity against the Ahl-ul-Bait, Moawiya like his son Yazid was no less than his father Abu Sufian. He first extracted the allegiance of the Syrians by presenting himself as a great religious leader and then addressed himself to the task of vilifying and degrading the Holy Prophet and his Progeny.

3. The virtuous attributes of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his family :

The third important reason of the malice and grudge, existing between Bani Hashim and Bani Umayyah, was the virtuous attributes with which Prophet Muhammad and his Holy Progeny were gifted. The existence of Prophet Muhammad as a Hashimite was enough to awaken an inferiority complex among their rival tribe, the Umayyads, but what added fuel to the fire was the Holy Prophet's frequent elaboration upon the virtues of his family members to such an extent that the recognition of their integrity survived all the endeavours of the enemies to malign the world opinion against them.

To quote Ibne Abi Hadid al-Mutazali,

"The traditions, regarding Hazrat Ali's attributes, were quoted from the Holy Prophet to such an extent that the Umayyads, inspite of their kingdom and power, failed to erase them from the memory of the world; and were it not for the will of God, the records of the excellence of the Ahl-ul-Bait would not have survived the long reign of the Umayyads due to their intense malice and severe hatred against the Hashimites."

4. Services rendered to 'Islam'

All the members of the Hashimite family, irrespective of their age, excluding Abu-Lahab and his followers, devoted their all to the cause of Islam. Hazrat Jafar Tayyar's propagation, the holy war of Hazrat Hamza and the heroism of Hazrat Ali were the weapons to counteract the efforts of the enemies of Islam. As a matter of fact, Abu Sufian and his followers were the deadliest enemies of Islam till the conquest of Mecca, but whenever they opposed the Holy Prophet, the Hashimites came to his rescue. After embracing Islam, Abu Sufian could naturally not assassinate the Holy Prophet but his mission was later accomplished by his son Muawiya, who poisoned Imam Hasan through Judah Binte Ashas, and by his grandson Yazid who massacred Imam Husain and the progeny of the Holy Prophet in the field of Kerbala.

Islamic History can never forget the occasion when the revered family of the Holy Prophet were brought as captives to the court of Damascus and the slain head of Imam Husain was placed in a golden tray before Yazid; while he, touching the sacred teeth of the Apostolical Imam with his stick, was reciting the following verses :

"If my ancestors, who had been slain in the battle of Badr, would witness the way I have avenged their blood from Muhammad's progeny, they would admire my deed immensely and would say, Bravo, Yazid! May not thy hands get benumbed, and it was nothing but an imperialistic design of the Hashimites, as neither a Divine Message ever came to Muhammad nor was there any Revelation (Wah)."

(Waseelat-un-Najat)

These were the causes of the enmity between the Hashimites and Umayyads, instigated by Umayyah himself and remained till the decline of the Umayyad's Empire.

In short, the royal treasury of Damascus met the lavish expenses of Muawiya's project which attracted not only the aristocrats of Hejaz, Iraq, Egypt and other Islamic countries but also exposed the materialists behind the garb of spiritualist and religious scholars from Mecca and Medina who thronged the court of Damascus. The coining of false traditions came into operation, which, in no time, brought forth lacs of traditions eulogising Umayyads and censuring and degrading Prophet Muhammad and his Holy Progeny. Thus, the false contents and the raw materials formed the very nucleus of the so-called 'History of Islam.'

CHAPTER XII: THE CALIPHATE

In the words of Pandit Thakur Parshad

"It cannot be denied," observes Pandit Thakur Parshad in his famous Judgment dated 20th July 1938 in Suit No. 665 of 1936, (of Jaunpur, U.P. India) that Hazrat Ali was one of those men-who stood by the Prophet all his life in everything he did and wanted to be done. As I gather from history written by the Muslims and non-Muslims alike,

Ali was the Prophet's constant shadow. He was the Boswell of a Johnson in his dealings with the Prophet. Ali can rightly be said to be the chief builder of the Prophet's power (wise in council-chamber and a valiant warrior in the battle-field was he). To his sword had fallen the momentous victories of Khandaq, Ohad, Badr and Khaiber. But for these, Muhammad's Mission would have perished in its very inception, and the world would have lost a reformation unequalled in man's history. The consolidation of the temporal power of Muhammad by Ali made it possible for the Message of Islam to be delivered in an unbelieving age. It would thus appear that Ali was the most highly entitled and the best deserved for Succession to the IMAMAT of ISLAM, both on the strength of his family relationship to the Prophet and on the ground of his merits, being the sincerest friend and follower of the Prophet."

In the Words of Justice Hidayatullah

Hidayatullah, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Mohammedan Law 16th Edition, page 12 and 13 of the Introduction, says : "The election in fact took place when the household of the Prophet (including Ali) was engaged in obsequies . . . The election led to the great schism between the Sunnis and the Shias."

"At Kerbala Husain died fighting after suffering great privations. The rift between the Sunnis and the Shias (Shian-i-Ali-party of Ali) became very great there after."

In the Words of Justice Baburam Verma

Justice Baburam Verma-Mohammedan Law-(1968 Edition page 75).

¹ "One of the most momentous problems in Islamic history arose as to the right of succession to Muhammed immediately after his death. The events that followed marked the first division in the Muslim world into the great factions of Sunnis and Shias The differences since the time of Abubakr continued to increase till they culminated in the murder of Husain and made the breach final."

Ali's Claim to the Caliphate

Ali's claim to the Caliphate was not regarded by his friends and supporters as arising from political aspirations, but as derived from God. The Divine Spirit which dwells in every prophet and passes successively from one to another was transferred at Muhammad's death to Ali, and from Ali to his descendants who succeeded him in the Imamate. There is no doubt whatsoever that the Holy Prophet had on various occasions brought to the notice of his followers that Hazrat Ali was to be his immediate Successor.

The merits of Ali and the language of the Holy Prophet in his favour had roused the envy of his contemporaries which is summed up in the words of Ahmed-ibn-Hanbal :

"There hath not come down to us regarding the merits of any of the companions of the Apostle of God what hath been transmitted concerning Ali. At times they are represented as so outstanding that it was for this reason that the Bani Umayyah were jealous of him and came to hate him. That he did have the special confidence of Muhammad is acknowledged by all. His friends remembered that even his boyhood had been spent with the Prophet, whom he never deserted. He was one of the earliest believers, perhaps the first after the Prophet's wife, Khadijah. They recalled that at the time of the expedition to Tabuk, when the Prophet had asked him to remain behind in Medina, he said to him, 'Is it not fitting that you should be in the same relation to me as Aaron was to Moses?'"

¹ Kalimatul Haq page 904 of Hamid Bin Shabbir.

In the words of Gibbon

"The birth, the alliance, the character of Ali, which exalted him above the rest of his countrymen, might justify his claim to the vacant throne of Arabia. The son of Abu Talib was, in his own right, the chief of the family of Hashim, and the hereditary prince or guardian of the city and temple of Mecca. The light of prophecy was extinct, but the husband of Fatima might expect the inheritance and blessing of her father: the Arabs had sometimes been patient of a female reign; and the two grandsons of the Prophet had often been fondled in his lap and shown in his pulpit, as the hope of his age, and the chief of the youth of paradise. From the first hour of his mission to the last rites of his funeral, the apostle was never forsaken by a generous friend, whom he delighted to name his brother, his vicegerent, and the faithful Aaron of a second Moses'. Gibbon abridged by W. Smith, p. 466.

"Ali was cousin-german of Muhammad and husband of Fatima, his beloved daughter. The right of succession, in order of consanguinity, lay with Ali; and his virtues and services eminently entitled him to it. On the first burst of

his generous zeal, when Islamism was a derided and persecuted faith, he had been pronounced by Muhammad his brother, his vicegerent; he had ever since been devoted to him in word and deed, and had honoured the cause by his magnanimity as signally as he had vindicated it by his valour." W. Irving.

The hereditary claims of the youthful hero over and above the Prophet's declarations appointing him as his vicegerent and proclaiming his position as that of Aaron to Moses, were not to the liking of an aristocracy of elders desirous of securing the sceptre for themselves. They were longing to crush the pre-eminence of the Hashimites, which had reached its zenith with the advent of Muhammad (peace be on him and his progeny.) The death of the Holy Prophet restored at length their liberty and the ancient discord of the tribes was so rekindled, that reconciliation was out of the question.

As soon as the Prophet breathed his last, without even waiting to commit him to the grave, they convened a meeting at Saqifa Bani Sa'ad, to deliberate on the election of a successor to the Prophet, and thus to deprive Ali of his legitimate right of succession.

The various occasions when the Holy Prophet mentioned Hazrat Ali as his Successor are given below :

1. The First Declaration known as Dawat-e-Asheera, Propagation of Islam among relatives, Gibbon gives a graphic description of the scene of this assembly in these words :
"Friends and Kinsmen" said Muhammad to the assembly, "I offer you and I alone can offer the most precious of gifts, the treasures of this world and of the world to come. God has commanded me to call you to His service. Who amongst you will support my burden? Who amongst you will be my supporter and my Successor ? "
No one answered. The spell of astonishment and suspense was at last broken by the impatient courage of Ali :
"O Prophet! I am the man; whosoever rises against thee, I shall dash out his teeth, tear out his eyes, break his legs, rip up his belly. O Prophet! I will be thy Successor."
Prophet Muhammad accepted his offer with pleasure. Thus on this very occasion of the advent of Islam, Hazrat Ali was publicly declared by the Holy Prophet as his immediate Successor.

2. At the time of his flight to Medina, the Holy Prophet deputed Ali to lie in his bed, for he knew that his enemies wanted to kill him. Hence it was Ali who risked his life for his Master; besides the Holy Prophet had appointed him as his representative to perform the duty of returning whatever property that had been deposited in trust with him.

3. The Betrothal of Fatima, the beloved daughter of the Holy Prophet, to his cousin and faithful disciple was another proof of his Successorship. The alliance-as revealed to the Prophet¹ was ordained by God, Who, he said to Fatima, had informed him of His Choice from the noblest of the earth of two blessed men, one being her father (himself) and the other her husband (Ali) ; and that the Lord had decreed his (the Prophet's) lineal descendants to spring forth from the couple (Ali and Fatima) and not direct from himself.

4. The Holy Prophet's declaration at the time of Fatima's Marriage , that had there been no Ali, he would never have wedded her to anyone else. This again proved the unqualified merits of Ali, who was considered virtuous above all, and the chosen Successor of the Holy Prophet.

It may be mentioned here that both Abubakr and Omar were anxious for the hand of Fatima, but were refused by the Holy Prophet.

5. When The Holy Prophet built The First Mosque at Medina, his companions were allowed to build their residential quarters around it. When they were sitting at leisure in the Mosque, a voice was heard : "Ye people, close your doors opening into the Mosque." The people were struck with awe to hear this voice, but they sat dumb without stirring to carry out the command, till they heard again the injunction to close the doors on pain of Divine Wrath. Terrified at this warning, they all approached the Holy Prophet who was in his apartment.

¹ Tabari; Tibrani; Ahmad b. Hanbal; Ibn Asakir.

Ali also came out of his apartment which was separated from the Prophet's rooms by a partition wall since the day of Fatima's marriage with him. He stood by the Prophet when he ordered that all the doors opening into the mosque, excepting those of Ali and his own, should be closed. People began to murmur. The Prophet was angry at their attitude and addressed them as follows : "Verily, God ordered His apostle Moses to build a Holy Mosque, and he allowed Moses, Aaron and the two sons of Aaron, Shabbar and Shabbir to live therein. I was likewise ordered to construct a Holy Mosque wherein myself and my brother Ali and his two sons, Hasan and Husain are allowed to

live. Verily, I do only what I am ordered to do. I never undertake to act on my own wish. Certainly I have not ordered of my own accord to close your doors or to leave Ali's door open. It is God who granted Ali an abode in the Holy Mosque." Consequently, the companions, whose houses skirted the quadrangle of the Mosque, closed their doors.

Besides, it is recorded on the authority of Sa'd, that The Apostle of God said to AR : "It is not lawful for any one to be in the mosque while under the obligation of performing a thorough ablution except for me and for thee." Major Janet's trans. of Suyuti's History page 175.

6. Ali's participation in all the wars during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, except one--the Tabuk Expedition. Here the Holy Prophet appointed Ali, his vicegerent, as Governor of Medina.

W. Irving in his life of Muhammad on page 170 says : " Muhammad now appointed Ali, as Governor of Medina, and guardian of both families. He accepted the trust with great reluctance, having been accustomed always to accompany the Prophet, and share all his perils." The hypocrites endeavoured to create trouble by taunting Ali that the Prophet had left him behind in Medina solely to rid himself of an encumbrance. Stung by this suggestion, Ali hastened after the Prophet to find out the truth. "These men," replied Muhammad, "are liars. They are the party of hypocrites and doubters, who would breed sedition in Medina. I left thee behind to keep watch over them, and to be a guardian to both our families. Sayuti states "I would have thee to be to me what Aaron was to Moses; excepting that thou cannot be, like him, a prophet; I being the last of the prophets."

7. When Ali returned successfully from the Tayef expedition, the Prophet on seeing him exclaimed "AllahO-Akbar" and took him alone to his sacred apartments to have a long and confidential talk with him. His companions began to murmur, wondering why the Prophet had engaged his cousin so long in confidential conversation, not allowing others to interfere. Hearing this, the Prophet said, that God himself had inspired Ali with Divine Secrets, and that it was for this reason that he was engaged in confidential discourse so long.

8. The Purge of the Symbols from the Walls of the Kaaba was significant in that the Holy Prophet made Ali his partner in their effacement. The Prophet's move in making Ali stand on his shoulders with the seal of prophet-hood under his feet, was intended to convey to the people around and to show the world that he had designated Ali as his partner and Successor in the very House of God.

9. Announcement of Sura Bara'at : The Prophet had received a revelation forbidding the unrighteous to perform the pilgrimage after this year (9 A.H.), as contained in the opening verses of Sura IX of the Quran. He therefore deputed Abubakr to proceed on pilgrimage to Mecca in order to announce the revelation to the pilgrims.

¹ Shortly after the departure of Abubakr, the Prophet received command from God, and in obedience thereto, he despatched Ali on his swiftest camel, the Al- Ghadzba, with instructions to overtake the caravan and to take back the book containing the verses from Abubakr, and to proceed himself with it, to announce it to the pilgrims at Mecca.

Ali overtook the caravan at Arai, and taking the book from Abubakr, proceeded to Mecca. Abubakr returned to Medina dejected, not knowing what had made the Prophet change his mind. Upon asking the Prophet, he was informed that he had a revelation to the effect (according to Hishami) that none should deliver the revelation to the people but he himself or a man of his family, or (according to Tirmizhi and Nasai) that none should deliver it to the people but himself or Ali.

This clearly showed that Ali was the only man chosen to succeed the Holy Prophet.

10. At the time of 'Mubahala' (Maledictory Conflict) with the Christians of Najraan, as per the Ayat of the Quran, the Prophet selected Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain. This again proved that there was no one better than Ali.

11. The Final declaration at Ghadir-e- Khum confirmed finally what had been formerly pointed out time and again. Whilst returning from the final Pilgrimage, when the a Holy Prophet arrived at Ghadir-e-Khum, suddenly the signs of a revelation appeared, and the voice of Archangel Gabriel coaxed him saying ;

¹ Tirmizhi; Ahmad Hanbal; Tabari; A'Lam-al-Wara, Tafseer M'alim-al-Tanzil; Abul Fida.

"O thou esteemed Messenger, impart the guidance that has been revealed unto thee", and in order to impress the urgency of the command, Gabriel went on to say :

"For if thou doeth it not, thou hast not imparted His message at all"; and again in the same breath to allay his fears and misgivings the angel added :

"God will protect thee from the evil designs of men:" Ch. 5 verse 67.

As the Prophet pulled up his reins, the whole entourage came to a halt. Those who had gone ahead were summoned back. The pebbles and thorns were brushed aside and a makeshift pulpit of saddles was set up.

People clustered round, the Prophet bent down and lifted Ali in his hands, and showing him to the crowds on all sides of the pulpit . . and proclaimed.

من فهذا مولاه كنت مولاه علي

"Mun Kunto Maulaho Fe Haaza Ali-yun Maulah" meaning "Of whomsoever I am the Master (Maula), This Ali is his Master (Maula)." So Saying, the Prophet lifted his hands heavenwards and prayed : "O our Lord ! Love those who love Ali, despise those who will despise Ali ; support those who will support Ali; reject those who will reject Ali."

It was on this occasion that the Holy Prophet made the choice final, leaving no doubt or uncertainty in the selection of his Successor. (full details on pages 77-89.)

The Verse of the Quran (LIII-3&4) says about the Holy Prophet : "He speaks not for his own purpose ; but gives utterance to the commandments revealed to him".

It was a matter of prime importance that the Divine Guidance should continue after him and that the Divine Sovereignty should be exercised by the chosen ones of God, to be appointed by the Prophet.

To convene an assemblage of over a lakh and fifty thousand pilgrims in the burning heat of the midday sun in the heart of a desert at Khum, the Holy Prophet did surely feel the acute urgency of completing his work and finally nominating his successor. It would be absurd to think that merely to call Ali his brother he would have done all this. Time and again he had called Ali his brother and by various names denoting him as his Successor. At Ghadir-e-Khum it was his final message and his Gift to the Muslims of the world.

In the words of Sedillot :

"Had the principle of hereditary succession (in favour of Ali) been recognised at the outset, it would have prevented the rise of those disastrous pretensions which engulfed Islam in the blood of Muslims. The husband of Fatima united in his person the right of succession as the lawful heir of the holy prophet as well as the right of election. It might have been thought that all would submit themselves before his glory so pure and so grand but it was not to be."

CHAPTER XIII: DISPUTE OVER THE CALIPHATE

The election at Saqifa Bani Sa'da

While the unsuspecting vicegerent was busy with the arrangements of the Holy Prophet's burial, the Mohajirs of Mecca and the Ansars of Medina were parading their respective merits at the Saqifa. The Mohajirs claimed preference on the ground of their priority in Islam, their kinship with the Prophet and their migration with him at the manifest hazard of their life and property. The Ansars urged that they had as much right as any other on account of their receiving the Prophet on his escape from his Meccan enemies, of protecting him in the time of adversity, and of helping him in fighting against his powerful foes, resulting ultimately in the establishment of his paramount power and authority. They even said that they apprehended revenge¹ if authority went to the people whose fathers and brothers they had killed in defending the Prophet . (It may be noted here that this is the origin of the Kerbala tragedy, as was remarked by Hobab, a quick witted and prudent spokesman of the Ansars. His fears proved correct

with the revengeful massacre of the Prophet's or Ali's posterity at Kerbala including even a six month's babe, and with the heinous crimes perpetrated in the outrage and the massacre of the Ansars at Harr). Hazrat Ali, having completed the burial rites of the Holy Prophet, appeared before the Muslims and asserted his right of succession, quoting various instances wherein the Holy Prophet, by the Divine Decree, had appointed him as his immediate Successor. His claim was rejected and Hazrat Abubakr was appointed the first Caliph. As predicted by the Holy Prophet, Ali took refuge in the sanctuary of his home.

¹ "Revenge was almost a religious principle among the Arabs. To revenge a relative slain was the duty of his family, and often involved the honour of his tribe; and these debts of blood sometimes remained unsettled for generations, producing deadly feuds." W. Irving.
Gibbon points out that the Arabs led a life of malice and suspicion and fifty years sometimes elapsed before the account of vengeance was finally settled.

Ali subjected to Humiliation.

Abubakr sent Omar to Fatima's house, where Ali and some of his friends were gathered, with orders to compel them by force to come and do fealty to him, if they could not be persuaded by fair means,. Omar was just going to set fire to the house, when Fatima asked him what he meant. He told her that he would certainly burn the house down unless they would consent to do as the rest of the people had done. ¹ Knowing, as they did, the temper of Omar, the men came out of the house. They were Ali, Abbas and Zubeir; Ali reproached them saying : 'O ye Mohajirs! Ye claimed the succession to the Apostle of God preferring your priority in Islam and your kinship to him before the Ansars. Now I put forward the same arguments in preference to you. Am I not the first who believed in the Prophet before any of you embraced his faith ? Am I not the nearest in relation to the Prophet than any one of you ? Fear God, if ye are true Believers, and do not snatch away the Prophet's authority from his house to your own.' Standing behind the door, Fatima reproachfully addressed the raiding party thus : 'O people ! Ye left behind you the Prophet's dead body to us and proceeded to wring out the Caliphate for yourselves, extinguishing our rights.' Then she burst into weeping and cried : 'O father ! O Apostle of God How soon after thee troubles are pouring on us at the hands of the son of Khattib and the son of Abu Qohifa. How soon they have ignored thy words of Ghadir-e-Khum and thy saying that Ali was to thee as Aaron was to Moses.' Hearing Fatima's wafflings, most of the people in Omar's party could not keep themselves from weeping and turned back. Ali was however, taken to Abubakr and was asked to swear him allegiance. He said, 'What if I do not do him homage ?' He was answered, 'By Allah, we shall kill thee if thou dost not do as others have done.' Upon this Ali said, 'What ! Will ye kill a man who is a servant of the Lord and a brother of the Apostle of the Lord?' Hearing this, Omar exclaimed, 'We do not admit that thou art a brother of the Apostle of the Lord ; and addressing Abubakr, who was silent all the time, desired, him to speak out his (Ali's) fate. But Abubakr said that so long as Fatima was alive, he would not compel her husband to do so. So Ali departed and proceeded direct to the tomb of the Prophet ² where he cried out, "O my brother ! Thy people now treat me with contempt and are bent upon killing me ³." naturally feared lest in the uncertain interval there might occur an outbreak on the part of the rightful claimant Ali, which would possibly destroy his ambitious dreams, he therefore anxiously wished and tried to get rid of Ali any how. But Ali was wise enough to bear with patience all the gravely insulting provocations and avoided any out-break which would have endangered the safety of Islam.

¹ S. Ockley's History of the Saracens P. 83; Abul Fida; Aqdal.

² Ibn Qoteiba.

³ It is contended by a large body of Muslims that according to their speculated terms, Omar was to succeed Abubakr on his death, but he

CHAPTER XIV: THE SADDEST YEAR

The year U A. H. was the saddest year in the life of Hazrat Ali. He lost two of his most beloved ones. In the early months of the year (28th Safar) died the Holy Prophet whom he loved and venerated as a father, as a master and as his dearest friend. This was followed by the death some three months later (14th Jamadi-ul-Awwal) of Janab-e-Fatima Az-Zahra, his dearest wife and companion.

Her farewell

"My dear husband, you know that this is the last day of my life, I am happy and also I am sad. Happy I am that my troubles will shortly be over and I shall meet my father and sorry I am to part from you. Please, make a note of what I say and do as I wish you to do. After me you may marry anybody you like but you must marry my cousin Yamama, she loves my children and Husain is very much attached to her. Let Fizza remain with you even after her marriage, if she so desires, she was more than a mere servant to me. I loved her like my daughter. Bury me in the night and do not let those who have been so cruel to me to attend my burial. Let my death not dishearten you, you

have to serve Islam and humanity for a long time to come. Let not my sufferings embitter your life, please promise me." Hazrat Ali said, "Yes, Fatima I promise." She continued, "I know how you love my children but be very careful of Husain. He loves me too dearly and will miss me sadly, be a mother unto him. Till my recent illness he used to sleep on my chest, he is already missing it." Ali was caressing the broken hand and was sobbing, and tears dropped on her hand. She looked up and said, "Do not weep; I know what a tender heart you possess. You have already borne too much and will have to bear more. Farewell my lord, Farewell my dear husband, Say Good-bye to me." Sorrow had choked Ali, his words were mixed with his tears, he said, "Good_-bye Fatima." Hearing this she said, "May the merciful Lord help you to bear these sorrows and sufferings patiently. Now let me be alone with my God." Saying this she turned towards her prayer carpet and prostrated before God.. When after a little time Hazrat Ali entered the room he found her still in prostration but the soul had departed to join her Holy father in the realm of His Grace, Mercy and Might. She died very young as Hazrat Ali says, "A flower nipped in the bud, it was from Heaven and it went back to Heaven, but has left its fragrance in my mind."

This is the saddest discourse that has ever been recorded of Hazrat Ali. He had delivered it on a really very sad occasion of his life. He was burying his dearest companion, his partner in life, who was the daughter of the Holy Prophet (A.S.) and whom he loved as dearly as he had loved her father. Nobody was dearer to him in this world than these two. Not his own life nor even his two dear sons. Both these two beloved ones had left him, one after the other, at a very short interval. The edge of sorrow was keener on this occasion because Fatima (A.S.) his dearest spouse, had died in the prime of her life, barely twenty years old. Her death was actually martyrdom.

His sermon on the occasion

"O Prophet of God please accept my Salams and those of your daughter who is being buried not very far from you, and who is to meet you so quickly. O the chosen Apostle! The death of your dear daughter has left me without patience and solace. I am heart broken."

"After having endured the separation from you I shall have to bear this catastrophe patiently O Prophet of God! I laid you down in the grave with my own hands, your soul departed from your body while you were resting upon my chest and your head was lying between my neck and my heart. Surely we belong to Allah and unto Him is our return." (Holy Quran Chapter II-156) Your trust (your daughter) which was entrusted to me is taken back from me. Sorrow now abides with me and happiness has taken leave. This grief is so overpowering that it engulfs and swallows other sorrows, and it has left me with sleepless nights and joyless days. From now onwards my life will be a continued heartache till God gathers me with you both in the realm of His Favour and Peace."

"O Apostle of God! Your dear daughter will tell you how your followers have behaved with her and how they have illtreated her. You please ask her the details of all that has happened to her during such a short period (barely three months) after your departure to Heaven. This period of separation from you was so short that people still remember you and were still talking about you."

"Please both of you accept my parting Salaams and goodbye. It is the wish of a sincere heart which has loved and will always love you both, a heart which will cherish and will carry your tender and loving memories to my grave. Good-bye O daughter of the chosen Apostle of God! May you rest in peace -which mankind has refused to you in this world. If I leave your grave to go to my home it is not because I am tired of your company, I wish I had it to the end of my life. And if I make a permanent abode on your grave it will not be because I doubt the reward that God has reserved for those who bear sorrows patiently. Good-bye! May God's peace and blessings be with you."

According to Shaikh Mufid, Hazrat Ali had twenty-seven children in all. This is inclusive of Imam. Hasan, Imam Husain, Janab-e-Zainab and Janab-e-Umm Kulsum, the grandchildren of the Holy Prophet. After the death of Janab-e-Fatima, Hazrat Ali married various ladies of different tribes.

Of those who played a very important role in the history of Islam, besides Imam Hasan, Imam Husain, Janab-e-Zainab and Janab-e-Umm Kulsum, was Muhammad al-Hanafiya who was presented with the flag of command at the battle of Siffin by Hazrat Ali.

The other was Hazrat Abbas, the Moon of the Hashimites and the Standard Bearer of Imam Husain at Kerbala.

When Imam Hasan was five years old and Imam Husain was four, the Holy Prophet had said, "O Ali, your death has already been decreed, You shall die in the mosque during your prayers, but the Almighty will give you a son who will die in the battle on Ashoora day."

This then was the gallant Abul Fazl Abbas. about whom the Prophet had foretold long ago.

His mother was Fatima Binte Huzam who bore Ali four sons, Abbas, Abdulla, Ja'far and Osman. Their mother was also known as 'Ummul Baneen' which means 'mother of sons'. All her sons were martyred at Kerbala along with Imam Husain. After their martyrdom, she requested people never to call her Ummul Baneen ever again.

CHAPTER XV: ALI'S SILENCE OVER THE CALIPHATE

Ali's silence in the matter of the Caliphate was not due to the absence of friends and supporters, but, out of respect for the wishes of the Holy Prophet; he did not press further his right to the Caliphate.

On hearing the news of the Holy Prophet's death, Abu Sufian came to Medina and, accompanied by Abbas Bin Muttalib, called on Hazrat Ali. He expressed his views Abdul on the Caliphate of Hazrat Abubakr thus: "AM Banff Taira (The tribe of Hazrat Abubakr), cannot rule over US. You are the only one suited to be our Caliph. Make use of this opportunity and wage a war against Abubakr. I swear to submit my allegiance to you and to all assistance that may be required."

Being fully aware of Abu Sufian's evil intentions towards the Holy Prophet and Islam in the past, and finding him opportunist with hatred, greed and racialism in a cheap his breed, Hazrat Ali refused to accept his proposal. Moreover, he knew that to wage a war would be detrimental and not beneficial to the cause of Islam. It was to avoid endangering Islam that he refused to fight against Hazrat Abubakr. So he preferred -to observe complete silence in the matter. (Tareekh Kamil).

Even if Abu Sufian had not offered his assistance to him for over-throwing the Caliphate of Hazrat Abubakr, and had his aim had not been for the welfare and prosperity of Hazrat Ali could well have taken care of the situation, having the support of the staunch followers of the Ahl-ul-Bait, such as Abu Zar Ghifari, Ammar Yasir, Salman, Miqdad and the other prominent members of the Hashimite family

Before his death on 22nd Jamadi-ul-Akhar 13 A.H., Abubakr nominated Hazrat Omar as his suo- Hazrat cessor, contrary to the principal laws of democracy stressed by the Muslims who had assembled at Saqifa Bani Sa'da.

Thus Hazrat Ali's right was usurped for the second time in succession. In spite of this, he helped the ruling Caliph in religious as well as other matters referred to him and which could not be otherwise solved. So sound were his judgments and his advice based on the Holy Quran that Hazrat Omar ordered, the interpreters of the Verses of the Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet to refrain from giving their opinion while Hazrat Ali was amidst them. Hazrat Omar died on 29th Zilhajj, 23 A.H. and Hazrat Osman was elected as the third Caliph by a Council of Electors consisting of six members appointed by the dying Caliph. John Bagot Glubb says in his book The Great Arab Conquests, "Osman had been a failure as Caliph. He had proved too weak to control the turbulent and factious spirit of the Arabs, especially at a time when an almost unbroken succession of victories had rendered them more than usually intractable. His was a limited mental outlook, unable to grasp the big issues and dominated by his greedy relatives. He himself lived comfortably and accepted presents, though doubtless (his primitive luxuries were negligible in comparison with) those of the former rulers of Byzantine and Madain."

Hazrat Ali continued assisting the ruling Caliph with the same perseverance as in the past, until Hazrat Osman was murdered. At this critical moment, when the angry groups of Muslims had besieged the house of Hazrat Osman, no one dared to protect the helpless Caliph.

"But" in the words of Amir Ali in The History of the Saracens, "Osman was bravely defended by Ali and his sons and dependants, and the insurgents had great difficulty in making any impression on the defenders. At last two of the besiegers scaled the wall, and there killed the aged Caliph."

Writings of some Historians on the death of Osman.

"For a few days after the murder of Osman", writes John Bagot Glubb, "Medina was an anarchy with the mutineers in complete control Ali was pressed to accept the Caliphate both by the companions of the Prophet-the now venerable elders of Medina-and by the insubordinate troops who virtually controlled the city. Six days after the murder of Osman, Ali was proclaimed Caliph in Medina. The majority of the citizens, including Talha and Zubeir took the oath of allegiance to him."

Eric Schroeder in 'Mohammad's People', published in England (1955) says, "Five days after the murder of Caliph Osman, the people gathered together and decided; 'We know no one better to be Imam and Caliph than Ali but he

will not take the burden, answered some, 'press him home till he consents'. They all gathered at Ali's house with such eagerness that they were pushing and crushing each other; they called Ali out, and said, 'If we go to our homes again without an Imam and a Caliph such a strife will stir as will never again be stilled; you will have to consent to be our Imam and Caliph of God.' Ali replied, 'small longings have I for this authority, yet the believers must have a chief; and right gladly will I accept the temporal authority of another, even Talha.' 'Nay, thou hast more right than I,' said Talha. One who stood near by forced open Ali's palm and Talha swore the oath of allegiance to Ali. Zubeir did likewise, and from his house they brought Ali to the mosque and everybody once again thronged round him to swear the oath of allegiance to him as their Imam and Caliph."

(Professor Sedillot in 'Histoires des Arabes' says, "It might have been thought that all would submit themselves before his glory; so fine and so grand; but it was not to be."

Contemplations for the election of a Caliph in place of Osman

After the murder of Osman terror reigned in the city and the regicides had the entire mastery of the situation, there being no settled government in Medina. The principal citizens, feeling the tumultuous state of the populace and apprehending civil war, clamoured for immediate election of a Caliph. The threatening attitude of those who had come from various parts of the empire, viz. Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia on the occasion was a source of great alarm, because they were resolved not to disperse until they knew whom they were to have as their Caliph.

There were two candidates, Talha and Zubeir (both brothers-in-law of Ayesha) who aspired to secure the Caliphate with the powerful support of Ayesha. (Ayesha was the daughter of the first Caliph Abubakr, and a wife of the Holy Prophet. Her youngest sister was a wife of Talha, who was also a cousin of her father. Her eldest sister was a wife of Zubeir, whose son Abdullah was adopted by Ayesha. Thus doubly related to both, Talha and Zubeir put her in the unique position of lending her powerful support to both the claimants to the Caliphate) To their great disadvantage, she was not present in Medina at this juncture, having gone on pilgrimage to Mecca. Talha, who had taken an active part in instigating those who had besieged Osman's dwelling and his associate Zubeir had some people of Basra and Kufa to support their pretensions, but the majority of the general public of Medina, who enjoyed the exclusive right of electing a Caliph, considered quite a different person to be best fitted for the office. He was a man admired by his friends and foes alike for his courage, eloquence, magnanimity, piety, nobility, and his near kinship to the Prophet. This was Ali, the cousin of the Prophet and the father of the Prophet's posterity from his beloved daughter Fatima. He was considered as the rightful successor to the Caliphate; and the people, now wishing to be governed by the Prophet's heir, desired to see Ali elevated to his Legitimate Dignity. Talha and Zubeir, cautioned by the mood of the moment, held their peace and thought it prudent to dissemble their feelings so far as to take the oath of allegiance to Ali with a steadfast resolve, however, of breaking it as soon as a favourable opportunity should occur.

Election of Ali

In this dilemma several of the principal men of Medina approached Ali and desired him to accede to their request. In reply he assured them that he had no wish for temporal power and would willingly accept the authority of any other person elected by them. They, however, insisted that there was no one so well qualified as he. Notwithstanding their persistence, Ali was resolute in his refusal and said that he would rather like to serve as an adviser than take the reins of government in his hands. The insurgents, who had themselves been responsible for the prevailing disturbed condition at Medina, were anxious to put the city back to its normal state and were much annoyed at the difficulty in the choice of a Caliph.

and insisted that before they quitted Medina, the citizens, in exercise of their right, must elect a Caliph within one day, as they were the proper persons to determine the controversy. If the choice was not made within the time allowed by them, they would put to the sword the leading men of Medina. Upon this the populace again came to Ali in the evening and explaining to him the situation, earnestly entreated him to reconsider their position and the danger to the religion. Overcome at length by their pathetic expostulations, Ali consented with reluctance saying: "If you excuse me and elect another, whomsoever you may think fit to choose, I shall most submissively yield obedience to him. If I am compelled to comply to accept the offer, I must say frankly at the outset that I shall conduct the administration quite independently, and I shall deal with all of you according to the Holy Book of the Lord and to the best of my knowledge and judgment." They unhesitatingly assented and proffered to give him their hand in token of doing fealty to him; but he refused to do anything unless it was done in public, so that no one might have cause to grumble. "Ali was apprehensive of the intrigues of Ayesha, Talha and Zubeir and the whole house of Umayyah (of which Moawiya, Osman's lieutenant in Syria, was chief), who, he knew, would avail themselves of every opportunity to oppose and disturb his government." Ockley's History of the Saracens p. 289.

Inauguration of Ali as Caliph.

Next morning (on the fourth day after Osman's murder), the people assembled in large numbers in the peat mosque. Here Ali made his appearance clad in a simple cotton gown and a coarse turban wound round his head and carrying a bow in his right hand and in the left hand his slippers which he had taken off in reverence for the place. Talha and Zubeir not being present, he caused them to be sent for. When they came, they offered him their hands in approbation of his election as Caliph. But Ali paused and said to them that if they were sincere in their hearts they might do him fealty in good earnest assuring them at the same time that if either of them would accept the Caliphate, he was quite willing to swear fealty with perfect sincerity and would be glad rather to serve as an adviser than to take the government upon himself. This, however, both of them declined, and expressing their perfect satisfaction, stretched forth their hands to pay homage to Ali. Talha's right arm was maimed as a result of a wound he had received in the battle of Ohad, and therefore could stretch it forth with difficulty. As he was the first to begin with the ceremony, the audience took it as an evil omen and a by-stander remarked: 'It is likely to be a lame business that is begun with a lame hand.' The presage proved only too true as subsequent events showed. The assemblage then swore allegiance to Ali and their example was followed by the general public. None of the Umayyads and the immediate adherents of Osman came in, nor did Ali press any one to come and do fealty to him. There were also some prominent men in Medina who kept themselves aloof, being disinclined to pay homage to Ali. These were according to Mas'udi, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, Maslama b. Khalid. Moghira b. Shoba, Qidama b. Matzun, Wahban b. Saifi, Abdallah b. Salam, Hassan b. Thabit, Kab. b. Malik, Abu Sa'id Khudri, Mohammed b. Maslama, and Abdallah¹ b. Omar, Fidzala b. Abeed, Kab b. Ajza;

Habib-al-Siyar adds: Zaid b. Thabit, Osama b. Zaid, Abu Musa Ashari, Zaid b. Rafe, Salma b. Salama, Sohaib b. Sinan, Noman b. Bashir; Tabari adds: Rafe b. Khadij. These people were named Motazilities.

Having done homage to Ali, the insurgents returned to their homes.

¹ Mas'udi assails the character of Abdallah b. Omar by his keeping himself from paying homage to Caliph Ali and later on swearing allegiance to Yazid b. Moawiyah as Caliph, and again to Abd al Malik b. Marwan.

CHAPTER XVI: INTRIGUES AND CONSPIRACY AGAINST ALI

The cry for the revenge of Osman's murder

After the inauguration of Ali, Talha and Zubeir with several others came to him and requested that the murder of Osman should by all means be avenged, proffering their services for the purpose. Ali knew full well that the crime was perpetrated hardly against their own will and even before their eyes, that now their cry for vengeance was nothing but a design to foment dissension by calling up a host of enemies. He, therefore, explained to them that the tragedy had its roots in old enmity; that there were several parties having different opinions; that it was not the moment to stir up a civil war; that the discontent was instigated by the devil, who, when once he holds the ground, never quits it easily; and that the very measure they suggested to undertake was the devil's own proposal to foment unrest and tumult. However, he told them that he had already sent for Marwan, formerly a secretary of Osman, and Naela, the wife of Osman, who were all the time in the same house with Osman, to enquire as to who the real culprits were who perpetrated the murder. Marwan was not forthcoming, while Naela said that two persons were culprits but that she could not name or identify them. Hazrat Ali further added that several persons were said to be implicated in the crime but no evidence was available against them. Under the circumstances, he declared that unless all parties united, it would be difficult to take effective steps. He asked them what method they would propose as best suited to gain the end. They replied that they knew of none. Then he said: 'If you will point out the real assassins of Osman, I shall not fail to vindicate the majesty of the Divine Law in putting them to their dues'. They were silent. Their insidious proposition being thus turned down, they departed.

In the meantime, warned by the sudden departure of the Umayyad families, Ali began to secure the good will of the Quraish and the Ansars by showing his high appreciation of their worth, for he was desirous of having as many friends as possible against the apprehended trouble with the Umayyads.

Reforms Contemplated by Ali.

The next matter for immediate attention of the new Caliph was the removal of the ungodly men, who governed various provinces with such tyranny that it drove the people to desperation, which cost Osman his life. Many abuses

had crept in during the reign of Osman, which called for immediate action, and most of the provincial governments were in the hands of persons of dubious antecedents and suspected faith. Having set his heart upon a thorough reform, he resolved to depose Moawiya and the other governors, who owed their appointments to his predecessor. Abdallah b. Abbas, who had returned by now from his pilgrimage to Mecca, strongly opposed this measure, especially of the proposal to depose Moawiya and advised him to postpone the execution of the contemplated measure for a short while till at least he should find himself more firmly established in authority. He argued : 'If thou deposest Moawiya, the Syrians, whom he has firmly attached to himself by his munificence, will rise up against thee in a body, will not recognise thee Caliph and worst of all, they will accuse thee of the murder of Osman. It will be advisable, therefore, to let him continue in his place till he submits to thy authority, and when once he has done that, it will be easy for thee to pull him out of his house by the ears whensoever thou dost desire it.' 'Besides,' he reminded Ali, 'Talha and Zubeir are not the persons to be relied upon; I have good reasons to suspect them of taking up arms against thee very soon, and perhaps they may join Moawiya' 'But the Divine Law,' said Ali, 'dost not allow of crafty deceptions. I must strictly follow the true principles of religion and therefore should not willingly allow any ungodly man to retain his office. The reason why Ali did not listen to those who advised him not to dismiss Moawiya is given by Osborne (History of Islam) in the following words: "The Bayard of Islam, the hero without fear and without reproach refused to be guilty of any duplicity or compromise with injustice." 'Moawiya will have nothing but the sword from me. I cannot retain him for a single day.' 'See,' continued he, 'I appoint thee, O Ibn Abbas ! Thou shalt go forth thyself to Syria to turn him out.' 'That', cried Ibn Abbas, 'is quite impracticable, Moawiya would not leave me alive because of my being akin to thee.'

When these arrangements were in progress, Talha and Zubeir came to Ali and applied for their appointment to the governments of Kufa and Basra, respectively. But Ali politely refused, observing that in the present emergency, he needed such able counsellors near at hand.

Having chosen his men for the government of the various provinces, Ali sent them out to their respective destinations in the month of Moharram 36 A.H. to replace the existing Governors. Thus he sent (1) Obeidallah b. Abbas to Yemen; (2) Qais b. Saad b. Obada to Egypt; (3) Qutham b. Abbas to Mecca; (4) Samaha b. Abbas to Tihama; (5) Awn b. Abbas to Yamama; (6) Osman b. Honeif to Busra (7) Ammara b. Shahab to Kufa; (8) Said b. Abbas to Bahrein; and (9) Sahel b. Honeif to Syria.

Obeidallah reached Yemen and found that Yala, his predecessor, had carried off to Mecca all the treasure amounting to sixty thousand Dinars, which he made over to Ayesha along with six hundred camels, one of which was a rarity, a big-sized, well bred animal, valued at 200 gold pieces. It was named Al-Askar and was specially presented for the use of Ayesha. Obeidallah, however, took possession of the government of Yemen.

Qais b. Saad, when approaching Egypt, was opposed by a party with leanings towards the late Caliph Osman whilst passing a frontier garrison; but by feigning an attachment to the cause of Osman, he succeeded in reaching the seat of his government, which he was to occupy. His predecessor, Abdallah b. Abi Sarh, being certain of his removal, had already made his way to Syria to take refuge with Moawiya, as most of the Umayyads had done on the accession of Ali.

Osman b. Honeif, who went to Busra, entered unopposed; but Ibn Mir, his predecessor, had also already made away with all the treasure and joined Talha and Zubeir. Osman occupied his post but found that disaffection was rife against Ali among a considerable number of the people.

Ammara on his way to Kufa was met by Tulaiha and Qaqa at the stage named Zabala, and they advised him to go back to Medina as the Kufians, they said, were resolved not to part with Abu Musa Ashari, who was set over them by their own choice by the late Caliph. They warned him that if he attempted to enter Kufa, he would have to face strong hostilities. Ammara retraced his steps, to Medina and reported the state of affairs to the Caliph, Ali.

When Sahel, the Governor designate of Syria, reached Tabuk, he met a party of horsemen who told him that the people of Syria were clamouring for the vengeance of Osman's blood and would not receive a man of Ali's appointment whom they did not recognise as Caliph. Being unprepared to force his advance, Sahel returned to Medina and reported the matter to Mi.

Scheme of the Umayyads to stir up the people against Ali's government.

In the meantime the Umayyads, sparing nothing which could possibly serve to disturb Ali and his government, carried, at the instance of ¹ Umme Habiba, a widow of the Prophet and sister of Moawiya, the blood-stained shirt which Osman was wearing at the time of his murder, together with the mangled fingers of Naela, his wife, to Moawiya in Syria, where he used them as instruments to stir up the spirit of vengeance among his people. Amr b.

Aas, the true counsellor of Moawiya, said to him: 'Show the dam her foal, it will stir her bowels'; and he accordingly suspended the shirt with the mangled fingers attached thereto on the pulpit of the mosque at Damascus. These emblems were also carried about for the army to witness. These objects, daily exposed to view, touched the Syrians, who wept till their beards were wet with tears, and swore vengeance upon the murderers of Osman.

¹ Mas'udi; Habib-al-Siyar.

Moawiya's defiance of Ali's authority.

When Sahel returned, Ali asked Talha and Zubeir to mark the extent to which the parties were divided and which he had cautioned them against. They replied that, if they were allowed to go out of Medina, they would be answerable if the disturbance did not cease. Upon this Ali said that sedition was like fire, the more it burnt the stronger it grew and the brighter it shone; he would, however, bear it so long as it was possible, and when it became unbearable he would try to extinguish it. He resolved in the first instance, to write a letter to Moawiya and also to Abu Musa demanding their allegiance. Abu Musa replied that he himself and the Kufians, with some exceptions, were entirely at his service; but from Moawiya no reply was forthcoming though weeks elapsed. In fact Moawiya had detained the messenger to witness the strength of his armies clamouring impatiently to revenge the blood of Osman, but, being, faithfully submissive to him, only waited for a word of command from him to march against all concerned. After several weeks Moawiya permitted the messenger to go back to Medina, accompanied by a messenger of his own, who carried a despatch which was superscribed on the cover with the words 'from Moawiya to Ali.' According to the instructions given to him by Moawiya, when Moawiya's messenger reached Medina, he carried the despatch aloft upon a staff on purpose to be seen by the people in the streets. Being well aware of Moawiya's disaffection for Ali, the people thronged, anxious to know what the contents of the message might be. It was just three months after the murder of Osman that the despatch was presented to Ali, who read the address and breaking open the seal found all blank within, which he rightly took as a token of utmost defiance. Astonished at the effrontery of Moawiya, he asked the messenger to explain the enigma. ¹ Upon this the messenger having begged and received assurance for the safety of his life answered: "Know then, I have left behind me in Syria sixty thousand warriors bewailing the murder of Osman under his blood-stained shirt by the oulpit of the great Mosque at Damascus, all bent on revenging the death of the Caliph on thee."

"O me!" cried Ali in astonishment. "I call God to witness that I am not guilty of it. O God! I seek Thy protection against so false a charge." Ali then declared that only the sword could be the arbitrator between Moawiya and himself; and turning to Ziyad b. Hantala who sat by him, said that an expedition against Syria might be proclaimed, which Ziyad soon communicated to the people.

¹ The messenger's reply to Ali is given by Major Price thus : "Fifty thousand men are assembled about the robes of Osman' whose cheeks and beards have never been dry from tears, and whose eyes have never ceased from weeping blood, since the hour of that prince's atrocious murder. They have drawn their swords with a solemn pledge never to return them to the scabbard, nor cease from mourning, until they have extirpated all concerned in that detested transaction. This sentiment they have left as a solemn bequest to their descendants; and the earliest principle that mothers instil into the minds of their infant offspring is, to revenge the blood of Osman to the last extremity.' This insolent speech excited the anger of the attendants of the Caliph to such a degree, that, had not Ali interposed, serious consequences might have ensued. Strange to say, this magnanimity on the part of Ali operated like magic on the messenger of Moawiya, who then declared himself convinced of his error, and solemnly swore that for the future he would never voluntarily separate from the person of Ali or acknowledge the authority of any other sovereign to his prejudice." S. Ockley's History of Saracens P. 295.

Departure of Talha & Zubeir.

Talha and Zubeir, whose desire to quit Medina was twice thwarted, now, seeing how the affairs were drifting, were anxious to acquire freedom of action, which they could not enjoy so long as they remained in Medina. Once more, therefore, they came to Ali and asked of him leave to proceed to Mecca on pretext of performing the Lesser Pilgrimage. Ali, who understood their motive, reminded them of the oath of allegiance which they had taken of their free will on the day of his inauguration and gave them leave to depart, saying that he expected strange things from them and therefore he had insisted on their sincerity in taking the oath.

Ali began prenarations for the expedition to Syria, calling for assistance from all the provinces and intensifying recruitment in Medina; entering into armed conflict with Moawiya, he had to face another serious rebellion, which is described in detail below.

Ayesha's plans for rebellion.

Ayesha, on her way back from the pilgrimage at Mecca, met Ibn Omm Kalab at Safif. He informed her of Osman's murder and Ali's accession to the Caliphate. When Ayesha heard of Ali's election as Caliph she said, "I wish Heavens had fallen and I had not seen this day." Ref. *Historians History of the World*. Vol. VIII page 170. She further added 'carry me back to Mecca' and, repeating it, she said, 'By God! Osman was innocent, I will avenge his blood.' She went instantly back to Mecca along with her confederate Hafsa ¹ and began to propagate sedition there. Sit. W. Muir in his *Annals of the early Caliphate* on page 351 and 352 gives the following account of Ayesha relating to this incident: "In the early period of Osman's troubles, Ayesha is said to have contributed her share towards fomenting public discontent. We are told that she even abetted the conspirators, among whom her brother Muhammad, son of Abubakr, was a chief leader. When on receiving the tidings of the murder, on her way back from Mecca, she declared that she would avenge Osman's death. 'What cried her informant, startled by her zeal, 'is this thy speech now, whilst but yesterday thou wast foremost to press the attack upon him as an apostate?' 'Yea', she replied, 'but even now he repented of that which they laid to his charge, and yet after that they slew him.' In reply her informant recited the verses purporting to say: 'Thou wast the first to foment the discontent. Thou commanded us to slay the prince for his apostasy.' Anyhow it must be admitted that Ayesha was a jealous, violent, intriguing woman, a character that may well account for much that would otherwise appear strange." In fact Ayesha expected either of the two, Talha or Zubeir, to succeed Osman, but contrary to her expectations, Ali was elected. She detested Ali and was extremely disturbed in mind and thought of resorting to open hostilities. Declaring herself avenger of Osman's blood, she induced the great and powerful clan of Umayyah to which Osman belonged to join her cause. The Umayyads who still resided at Mecca and those who had fled from Medina on the accession of Ali, readily gathered under her flag. The deposed Governors of several provinces also came in, one after the other, and, persuading easily a large number of malcontents, made common cause with her. Yala, the ex-governor of Yemen, furnished her with ample means to carry on the war by presenting her the State treasure, which he had carried off from Yemen.

¹ Tabari.

Talha and Zubeir join Ayesha in her rebellion

About four months after the murder of Osman, Talha and Zubeir, the brother-in-law of Ayesha reached Mecca and found things well in progress. Notwithstanding their oath of allegiance to Ali, which they now said they took under compulsion and were not therefore bound to abide by it, they longed to take up her cause, which, in case of success, was sure to prove to their own benefit. Accordingly they joined Ayesha and began to take measures against Ali, proclaiming among the faction at Mecca that Ali's affairs were quite in an unsettled condition. "Ayesha, Talha and Zubeir who had always been enemies of Osman, and were, in fact, the contrivers of his death and destruction, when they saw Ali elected, whom they hated equally, if not more, made use of Osman's real and sincere friends as instruments of their malice against the new Caliph. So that from very different motives they all unanimously joined in demanding satisfaction for the murder of Osman.

The joint move of Ayesha, Talha and Zubeir has been mentioned in '*Historians History of the World*, Vol. VIII page 170, as follows : "Though she (Ayesha) had obviously shared the conspiracy against Osman, she now proclaimed herself as avenger and she denounced Ali as the author of his death. Joined with her were Talha and Zubeir who well knew the falsehood of Ayesha's allegation"

Simon Ockley's *History of the Saracens* p. 294. The standard of rebellion was raised and the tale of these distinguished persons was eagerly listened to by the factious and the revengeful Arabs at large, whose fathers and brothers had been killed by Ali in defending the Prophet's cause on the occasion of various wars in his time. Many a discontented Arab flocked under the Standard. The treasure, which Ibn Amir the deposed Governor of Busra had brought away with him, was now utilized by Talha and Zubeir in equipping the force.

War council

The preparations for war having been completed, the leaders of the rebellion held a council to discuss the place where the operations could be carried on with success. Ayesha proposed to march upon Medina to attack Ali in his capital. This idea was abandoned because she was informed that the people of Medina were unanimously in favour of Ali, and too powerful to be assailed with success. Some suggested that they proceed to Syria and make a joint attack with the insurgents there; but Walid b. Oqba strongly opposed this suggestion, saying that Moawiya would not approve of their presence in his capital, much less the control of his armies by them in such critical times, rather

he would take it ill, as an interference in his designs to gain independence, which, as a matter of fact, kept him from sending the succour demanded of him as a feudatory chief by Osman, whose days he thought were numbered. The objection being weighty, the suggestion was dropped. At last, Talha having assured them that he had a strong party in his favour at Busra and that he was confident of its surrender, it was finally resolved to march toward that city. A proclamation was accordingly made by beat of drum through the streets of Mecca that Ayesha, the Mother of the Faithful, accompanied by the distinguished chiefs, Talha and Zubeir, was going in person to Busra; that all those who were desirous of avenging the atrocious murder of the prince of the faithful viz. Osman, and of doing service to the cause of the Faith, should join her, even if they had no equipments, which would be furnished to them as soon as they came in.

Ayesha instigates Umme Selma

Ayesha desired Umme Selma, another wife of the Prophet who had been at Mecca on pilgrimage, to accompany her in the adventure, but she indignantly declined the invitation, and reasoned with Ayesha whether she was justified to venture against the prophecy of the Prophet in opposing Ali, who, she pointed out, was also Caliph duly elected unanimously by the people of Medina and acknowledged by the people of several provinces. Reciting the Prophet's saying: "Ali is my vicegerent in my life as also on my death, whosoever disobeys him disobeys me," she asked Ayesha if she had heard the Prophet say so. The latter assented. Then Umme Selma reminded her of the Prophet's prediction, to which he had given utterance reproachfully to his wives: "A short while after, the dogs of Hawab shall bark at one of my wives who will be amongst a rebellious mob. Oh! that I knew who she was! Beware O Homeira! lest thou should be the one." Ayesha, was alarmed at these reminders and Umme Selma continuing her warnings said: "Do not let thyself be beguiled by Talha and Zubeir. They will entangle thee into wrong but would not be able to extricate thee from the wrath or disgrace that may befall thee." Ayesha returned to her lodging half inclined to desist from her scheme, but the entreaties of her adopted son, Abdallah b. Zubeir, persuaded her vindictive nature to avenge herself upon the man who had once joined the Prophet in suspecting her when a false charge was laid against her. "Ayesha, spurning the restraints of her sex, prepared to join the campaign and to stir up the people of Busra, as she had stirred up those of Mecca. Hafsa, daughter of Omar, another wife of the Prophet, was with difficulty restrained by her brother who had just fled from Medina, and held aloof from either side from accompanying her sister-widow." Muir's Annals, p. 353.

Ayesha's march on Busra

At length Ayesha, mounted in a litter carried by the camel al-Askar, marched forth from Mecca at the head of one thousand volunteers, Six hundred of them were riding on camels and four hundred on horses. She was attended on her right by Talha and by Zubeir on her left. On her way, many a people joined her, soon swelling the number of the rebel army to three thousand.

Moghira b. Sho'ba, who was Governor of Busra and of Kufa, in the time of Caliph Omar, and Sa'id, one of the veteran elders of Mecca and a Mohajir of the first emigration who also accompanied the cavalcade, suspecting the motives of Talha and Zubeir, enquired of them as to who would be the Caliph in the event of victory. "Either of us two, as chosen by the people", was the ready response. "And why not a son of Osman?" asked Sa'id. To this the reply was, "Because the elders, being distinguished chiefs and Mohajirs, should not be overlooked." "But I think", rejoined Sa'id, "if you are going forth to revenge the murder of Osman, his successor should, of a right, be one of his own sons, two of whom Ahab and Walid e already in your camp. Your succession would mean that, under pretence of Osman's blood, you sought to fight for your own profit." "It will, however", they answered, "depend upon the men of Medina to choose whomsoever they like." Moghira and Sa'id, distrusting the leaders of the rebellion, resolved to retire, and accordingly they retraced their steps to Mecca along with their followers, who formed part of a body of the rebel army. Turning to the troops, as they were passing by them shouting: "Slay the murderers of Osman, destroy them, one and all", Moghira cried out to Marwan and others: "Whither are ye going to hunt the murderers? They are before your eyes on the humps of their camels (pointing out towards Talha, Zubeir and Ayesha), slay them and go back to your homes. They are the proper objects of your vengeance, they had as much hand in the detested affair as anybody else." The army, however, continued its march shouting wildly all the way. It was urged that the question of succession was premature, and Ayesha declared that the choice of a successor was the exclusive right of the men of Medina and must rest with them as before and, to avoid further misgivings, she directed that Abdallah, the son of Zubeir, should lead the daily prayers.

Ayesha in the valley of Hawab

On their way to Busra, the rebel army received intelligence that Ali, the Caliph, had come out of Medina in their pursuit. In order to reach Busra uninterrupted and unhampered Ayesha ordered that the route should be changed. Leaving aside the highway, her armies marched by an unfrequented pathway to Busra. The guide, to dispel the irksomeness of the long autumn nights, whiled away his time singing and occasionally shouting the name of each valley, desert or village they were passing by. Reaching one night a place, he cried: "The valley of Hawab." Struck at this name, a chill ran through Ayesha's whole frame, instantly the dogs of the village surrounding her camel began to bark at her most clamorously. "What place is this?" she screamed aloud, and the guide repeated in his usual tone, "The valley of Hawab." The Prophet's prediction recently brought to her memory by Umme Selma, as already observed, was now uppermost in her mind, and she shivered and exclaimed, "Alas I am indeed the wretched woman of Hawab. The Prophet had already warned me against this." Talha and Zubeir swore falsely that the guide had mistaken the name and that the place was not Hawab. They also suborned fifty witnesses to swear to it. In spite of this she refused to proceed further. This is said to be the first occasion of false evidence given publicly since the dawn of Islam.

Thus for the night and the whole of the following day they halted at Hawab. Talha and Zubeir were quite perplexed and did not know what to do. At last, hitting upon a clever stratagem, the next night they made the army raise a cry, "Quick! Ali's army is fast approaching to overtake us." Ayesha struck with terror, instantly took to her heels, found her camel, and nimbly got into her litter. The march was instantly resumed.

Ayesha's encampment at Khoreiba

The army pushed forward in haste towards Busra and reaching the outskirts of the town encamped at Khoreiba. Ayesha sent for Ahnaf b. Qais, a leading citizen of Busra, and asked him to join her army. After some discussion on the subject, he refused to take up arms against the Caliph. Resolving, however, to remain neutral, he left Busra with six thousand of his followers and encamped in the suburbs of Busra at Wadi-al-Saba. Ayesha sent a message to Osman b. Honeif, the Governor of Busra, inviting him to come to her. Immediately Ibn Honeif, putting on his armour and followed by a large number of the citizens, went forth to meet Ayesha. But to his surprise, he found the army of the insurgents arrayed on the parade-ground followed by a large number of the factious element of the citizens, who had in the meantime joined Ayesha to stand by her side. A parley ensued: "Talha and Zubeir alternately addressed the multitude, and were followed by Ayesha, who harangued them from her camel. Her voice, which she raised that it might be heard by all, became shrill and sharp, instead of intelligible, and provoked the merriment of some of the crowd. A dispute arose as to the justice of her appeal; mutual revilings took place between the parties; they gave each other the lie, and threw dust in each other's faces. One of the men of Busra then turned and reproached Ayesha: "Shame on thee, 'O Mother of the Faithful!" said he, "Murder of the Caliph was a grievous crime, but was a lesser abomination than thy forgetfulness of the modesty of thy sex. Wherefore dost thou abandon thy quiet home and thy protecting veil and ride forth like a man barefaced on that accursed camel to foment quarrels and dissensions among the Faithful?" Another of the crowd scoffed at Talha and Zubeir: "You have brought your mother with you", cried he, "why did you not also bring your wives?" Insults were soon followed by blows, swords were drawn, a skirmish ensued, and they fought until the hour of prayer separated them." W. Irving's Successors of Muhammad. p. 172.

The gates of the city were now closely barred against the entry of the insurgents. Some days passed in skirmishes with serious loss to the Governor's party and the rebels had the advantage of gaining some footing in the town. At length a truce was agreed upon and one of the terms being that a messenger should be sent to Medina to enquire whether Talha and Zubeir paid homage to Ali on the day of his inauguration voluntarily or under compulsion. In the former case they would be treated as rebels and in the latter their partisans in Busra would be justified in upholding their cause. The insurgents, who were desirous to get a chance to overpower the Governor and to take possession of the city, acquiesced in this arrangement to gain time for the longed for opportunity. A messenger was sent to Medina. When he delivered his errand, the people were all silent. At last Osama stood up and said that they were compelled. But this assertion of Osama would have cost him his life had not a friend of his, viz., Sohaib, a man of influence and authority, taken him under his protection and led him home.

Seizure of Busra by Ayesha.

In the meantime the insurgent leaders endeavoured to draw Ibn Honeif, the Governor of Busra to their camp by friendly messages, but he suspecting treachery, confined himself to his own house and substituted Ammar in office. Talha and Zubeir, taking a chosen band one stormy dark night, mixed with the congregation in the mosque in the guise of worshippers, surprised the Governor after killing forty of his guard and took him prisoner. On the following day Hakim b. Jabala tried to release the prisoner, but in his efforts lost his life together with seventy of his

followers. A serious conflict raged throughout the city, resulting in the total discomfiture and heavy loss of Ali's party. Ayesha entered the city in state and the government of Busra, together With the treasury, passed into the hands of the insurgents.

Soon after the capture of Osman b. Honeif. Ayesha was asked in what way it was her pleasure to punish him. She passed a sentence of death on him, but on the entreaties of a woman of her retinue, she was moved to spare his life. He was doomed, however, to suffer great tortures before he could escape from the hands of his captors. His beard, moustache and eyebrows were plucked out hair by hair and he was then contemptuously turned out.

Tidings to Ali of Ayesha's revolt

The reader might naturally be anxious to know what Ali, the Caliph, was doing all this time. Let us therefore leave the insurgents in possession of Busra and follow Ali : Rumours of the disturbance at Mecca reached Medina, but Ali said that unless an overt action of the malcontents threatened the very unity of Islam, he would not take drastic measures against them. After some time, Umme Selma, ¹ who had spurned the proposals of Ayesha at Mecca, as already observed, repaired to Medina soon after the departure of the rebels to Busra and informed Ali of the revolt of Ayesha, Talha and Zubeir. Again, an urgent message was also received from Omm-al-Fadzl, the widow of Abbas at Mecca, with news of the rebels' designs against the Caliph and of their march upon Busra.

On receipt of this intelligence, Ali assembled the people in the great Mosque and called them to take up arms and to follow him against the rebels. The Caliph's eloquent address and warm appeal was received with coldness and apathy ² which pervaded the assembly. No one appeared ready to respond to the call. Some of them had in their minds the fact that the person against whom they were urged to take up arms was none other than the Mother of the Faithful, i.e. Ayesha; others dreaded a civil war, some doubted if Ali might not in some degree have been implicated in the death of Osman, a charge which had been so artfully brought against him. For three consecutive days Ali tried his best to move the people to bestir themselves. At last on the third day Ziyad b. Hanzala rose and approaching Ali said : "Let whomsoever will, hold back, I shall go forward." Following his example, two Ansars, Abul Hathim and Khazima b. Thabit, came forth saying : "The Prince of the Faithful is innocent of the murder of Osman, we must join him." Instantly Abu Qatada, another Ansar, a man of distinction stood up and drawing his sword exclaimed : "The Apostle of God, upon whom be peace, girded me with this sword. I have kept it sheathed a long while; but now it is high time to draw it against these wicked men who are always deceiving the people." (Simon Ockley's History of the Saracens p. 300).

¹ Rawdzat-al-Ahbab.

² Ibn Athir.

Even Umme Selma ¹ in the enthusiasm of her zeal for Ali said to him : "O Commander of the Faithful! If it were permitted by Law, I myself would have accompanied thee in thy expedition, but I know thou wouldst not allow it, so I offer the services of my son, Omar b. Abi Selma, who is dearer to me than my own life. Let him go with thee and partake of thy fortunes." Ali accepted the offer and Omar b. Abi Selma accompanied him in the expedition. He was a man of valour, possessed of piety and many other good qualities, he was subsequently appointed Governor of Bahrein.

¹ Tabari ; ibn Khaldun.

Ali's march against Ayesha

In short, a levy of nine hundred men could be raised with difficulty. The cold attitude of the people of Medina at this critical juncture made Ali so dejected that he resolved not to come back among them but to transfer his seat of government elsewhere. However at the head of this small force of nine hundred ¹ men he marched out of Medina wishing to overtake the rebels on their way to Busra. Arriving at Rabazha (on the outskirts of Nejd), he found out that the insurgents had already passed and were beyond reach. Though joined on his march by the Bani Tay and some other loyal tribes, still, not being sufficiently equipped for further advance, he ordered a halt at Zhi Qar waiting for reinforcements from Kufa, where he had sent Mohammed b. Abubakr and Abdallah b. Ja'far to Abu-Musa-al-Ashari, the Governor, requesting him to urge the people to come over to their Caliph in order to subdue the rebels and to try for the re-union of a divided people.

Abu Musa-al-Ashari's conduct towards the Caliph

Abu-Musa cherished no good will towards the Caliph because the latter having sent Ammara b. Shahab to replace him, as has been mentioned earlier, as he was a weak and spineless man of low spirit. Ayesha had already sent him

letters to dissuade his people from their allegiance to Ali and to persuade them to rise up to avenge the murder of Osman. Apprehensive of the success of Ayesha at Busra, he had already begun to waver in his allegiance to Ali and to advocate her cause to the people. When the Caliph's messengers arrived at Kufa and gave out his command, there was perfect silence among the people in the mosque. At length the people asked Abu-Musa how he advised them in the matter of joining the Caliph's forces. He gravely replied that going to fight for Islam and sitting quietly at home were two different things. The former was the way of the world, while the latter was the heavenly way. They should take their choice. Enraged at hearing him speak thus, the Caliph's envoys reproached him, to which he answered with an oath that the homage done to Osman still hung round his neck and round the neck of his master meaning Ali as well as his people; so ² they were resolved to see the murderers of Osman liquidated withersoever they were; and so long as any of the murderers remained alive they would not go out to join any expedition. He desired Mohammed b. Abubakr and Abdallah b. Ja'far to go back as fast as they could to Ali and tell him so.

³ In the meantime Osman b. Honeif, the ex-Governor of Busra, presented himself at Zhi-Qar. His appearance was strange indeed. The Caliph recognised him and observed with a smile that he had left him an old man but he returned to him a beardless youth. In fact Osman had a remarkably beautiful beard, the loss of which, together with the hair plucked out of his moustache and eyebrows, gave him an uncanny appearance, which made all smile. He recounted the misfortunes he had experienced at the hands of the insurgent leaders, and the Caliph sympathised with him for his sufferings and comforted him by assuring him that his sufferings would be counted as merits. He then said that the men who were the first to accept him as a Caliph were the first to break their oath of fealty and the first to rise up in rebellion against him. He could not understand their voluntary submission to Abubakr, Omar and Osman and their opposition to him.

As soon as Mohammed b. Abubakr and Abdallah b. Ja'far came back and reported what Abu-Musa had said, the Caliph despatched Ibn Abbas' and Malik-al-Ashtar to Kufa to use their influence over the Kufians. Arriving at Kufa, they delivered the message and invoked the assistance of the Kufians. Abu-Musa, however, addressed them thus : "Brethren! The Companions of the Prophet know better of God and His Prophet than those who are not Companions. The disturbance is amongst the Companions, they know best who is to be trusted. You should not meddle with their affairs. For such an occasion the Prophet has said: "There would be a disturbance in which he that sleepeth is better than he that is awake, and he that is awake is better than he that sitteth, and he that sitteth is better than he that standeth; and he that standeth is better than he that walketh, and he that walketh is better than he that rideth." Wherefore sheath your swords, cut your bow strings and put off lances. Sit quietly in your houses and receive the injured to your hospitality till the disturbance is ceased. Let the Companions of the Prophet be all agreed. You need not make war against any. Let those who have come to you from Medina return back."

1 Rawdzat-al-Safa.

2 Tabari.

3 Abul Fida.

Abu Musa's deposition from the government of Kufa

Ibn Abbas and Malik-al-Ashtar went back and reported to the Caliph, who then sent his son Hasan accompanied by Ammar Yasir, who had been for some time Governor of Kufa during the reign of Caliph Omar and who for his outspoken remarks had been severely maltreated by Caliph Osman. Malik al-Ashtar, a man possessed of initiative and determination, exercising great influence over the Kufians, who was irritated by the prevarications of Abu-Musa in his previous mission, followed Hasan along with Qartza b. Ka'b Ansar, who was nominated by the Caliph to replace Abu-Musa in office. Abu-Musa received Hasan quite respectfully, but when in the mosque the assistance required by the Caliph was sought for, he opposed the proposal as vigorously as before, repeating the saying of the Prophet as mentioned in the foregoing paragraph viz. "There should be a disturbance in which he that sleepeth is better than he that walketh etc." Ammar Yasir, the venerable old favourite of the Prophet aged about 90, a stern soldier and veteran, now General of the Horse in Ali's forces, hearing the cunning speech of Abu-Musa, promptly replied to him that he had misapplied the words of the Prophet which were meant to rebuke such men as Abu-Musa himself, who were far better sleeping than awake, better sitting than standing etc. Still Abu-Musa persisted in hindering the people from complying with the envoys' proposals. A tumult ensued when ² Zaid b. Sohan stood up and read out a letter from Ayesha commanding him either to remain at home neutral or to join her. Having read this letter he produced another, meant for the Kufian general public to the same effect. Having read both these letters he remarked : "She is required by the Quran and by the Prophet to sit quietly at home in her house, and we to fight till there should be no sedition. She commands us to play her part while she has taken ours upon herself." Some people among the audience reproached Zaid for this remark against the Mother of the Faithful. Abu-Musa again began his address opposing the Caliph, upon which some of the audience chided him for his unfaithfulness and disloyalty and forced him to leave the pulpit, which was then occupied by Hasan b. Ali.

1 Ibn Athir.

2 Tabari.

¹ Abu-Musa had to leave not only the pulpit but also the mosque at once, as some of the men of the garrison stationed at the Governor's castle came crying to him, bearing evidence of having been severely beaten with batons and sticks. It may be explained that, while the dissension was going on in the mosque, Malik-al-Ashtar taking a party of his men seized the castle of the Governor by surprise, caused the garrison to be soundly beaten and sent them to the mosque, to cut short the discussion. This prompt measure of Al-Ashtar produced the desired effect ; and it placed the cold-spirited conduct of Abu-Musa in such a ridiculous light that the feelings of the populace were instantly turned against him. He proceeded to the castle in haste only to receive orders from Malik to vacate it at once. The mob at the gate were ready to plunder his house, but Malik interposed and granted Abu Musa twenty four hours to take away his belongings.

Hasan b. Ali raising a levy of 9000 Kufians

From the pulpit Hasan addressed the congregation very fluently. "He maintained the innocence of his father in regard to the assassination of Osman. His father, he said, had either done wrong, or had suffered wrong. If he had done wrong, God would punish him. If he had suffered wrong, God would help him, The case was in the hands of the Most High. Talha and Zubeir who were the first to inaugurate him, were the first to turn against him. What had he done, as Caliph, to merit such opposition ? What injustice had he committed ? What covetous or selfish propensity had he manifested ?" W. Irving's Successors of Muhammad p. 177.

He reminded the people the saying of the Prophet who had said that Ali would always be on the side of truth. The eloquence of Hasan was extremely effective; the heads of the tribes were telling each other that they had given their hands in allegiance to Ali. He had done them the honour by wishing to make them arbiters in such an important affair. They were sorry for not giving heed to the messengers, which necessitated the Caliph to depute his own son to come to them asking for their assistance. They finally concluded that they ought to obey their Caliph and must comply with such a reasonable demand.

Hasan told them that he was going back to his father and that those who thought fit to accompany him might do so, while others might follow by land or by water. Accordingly ² nine thousand Kufians came over to Ali, some by land and some by water. Welcoming them, Ali- said : "I have called you hither to be witnesses between us and our brethren of Busra. If they submit peaceably, it is what we desire; if they persist we will heal them with gentle usage, unless they fall upon us injuriously. We, on our part, will omit nothing that may, by any means, contribute to an accommodation, which we must prefer to the desolation of war." S. Ockley's History of the Saracens p. 306.

The army of the Caliph, having been reinforced from other quarters as well, now numbered twenty thousand strong, and with this army he advanced towards Busra ³. While staying at Zhi-Qar, Ali wrote letters to Ayesha,

Talha and Zubeir warning them against the unwise steps they had taken and telling them that none of them could stand as legitimate avengers of the blood of Osman, who was an Umayyad while none of them belonged to the Bani Umayya. Ayesha sent a reply that the situation had already reached a stage at which warnings were useless, as for Talha and Zubeir they gave no written answer but sent word to inform Ali that they were not prepared to obey his dictates and that he was at liberty to do whatever he wished.

¹ Ibn Athir ; Ibn Khaldun.

² Tabari.

³ Rawdzat-al-Ahbab.

Ali's arrival at Busra

Ayesha's army numbered thirty thousand, but it consisted mostly of raw recruits, while that of Ali's was composed principally of veterans and men who had seen service and were the Companions of the Prophet. When Ali appeared with his forces marshalled in an imposing battle array before Busra, Ayesha and her confederates were struck with terror. ¹ Approaching Busra, Ali sent Qa'qa b. Amr, a Companion of the Prophet, to the rebel leaders to negotiate peace if possible. Ayesha replied that Ali should personally negotiate with them. ² When Ali arrived, messages passed between the hostile forces with a view to compromising the matter. Ali, Talha and Zubeir were seen holding long conversations, walking together backward and forward in the sight of both the armies, the negotiations went so far that every one expected that a peace would be effected; for Ali, with his impressive eloquence, touched the hearts of Talha and Zubeir, warning them against the Judgment of Heaven and challenging them to the ordeal of invoking heavenly wrath on those who promoted and prompted the murder of Osman instigating the malefactors. In one of their conferences Ali asked Zubeir "Hast thou forgotten how the Apostle of God once asked thee if thou did not love his dear Ali, and thou answered 'Yes', dost thou not remember the Prophet's prophecy that 'nevertheless, there will come a day when thou wilt rise up against him and bring many miseries upon him and upon all the

Muslims'. Zubeir answered that he remembered it perfectly well and he felt sorry, that had he remembered it before, he would never have taken up arms against him. Zubeir appeared most inclined not to fight against Ali.

He returned to his camp and acquainted Ayesha with what had passed between himself and Ali. "It is said that upon this hint he declined fighting with Ali, but that having acquainted Ayesha with the circumstances, she was so furious against Ali, that she would not listen to an accommodation on any terms. Others say that his (Zubeir's) son Abdallah (adopted by Ayesha) made him change his mind by asking him whether or not he was afraid of Ali. Upon Zubeir answering, 'No, but that he was sworn to Ali', Abdallah bade him expiate his oath, which he did by giving a slave his liberty, and forthwith prepared without further hesitation, to fight against Ali." S. Ockley's History of the Saracens p. 307.

The two armies were camping opposite one another on the same field. During the night one party fell upon the other, each blaming the other for provoking a drawn battle. The reader may question which of the two parties was to blame for this nocturnal attack. Which party attempted at pacification to avoid bloodshed, and which thwarted the attempts. The circumstances related above are only too clear to indicate the truth.

¹ Al-Murtudza ; Abbasi.

² Tabari; Rawdzat-al-Ahbab; Imammat-wal-Siyasat.

The battle of the camel 'Jamal'

Early next morning, Friday the 16th of Jamadi 11, 36 A.H. (November 656 A.D.) Ayesha took the field, mounted in a litter on her great camel Al-Askar and riding up and down among her troops, animating them by her presence and by her voice. In history the battle is named 'the battle of the camel' after the strange animal on which Ayesha was mounted, though it was fought on the field of Khoreiba close to Busra . Ali's army faced the enemy in battle array, but the Caliph ordered them not to take the offensive unless the enemy began the onset. He further gave stringent orders that no wounded should be slain, no fugitive pursued, no plunder seized nor the privacy of any house violated. No sooner had he given these orders when showers of arrows started to pour from the enemy but, still Ali forbade his soldiers to retaliate and bade them wait.

"To the very last moment Ali evinced a decided repugnance to shed the blood of a Muslim; and just before the battle, he endeavoured to turn the adversary to allegiance by a solemn appeal to the Quran. A person named Muslim immediately offered himself for the service; and uplifting a copy of the sacred volume with his right hand, this individual proceeded to admonish the enemy to recede from their unwarranted designs. ¹ But the hand which bore the Holy Manuscript was severed from his arm by one of the infuriated multitude. Seizing the Quran with his left, that limb was also severed by another scimitar. Still, however, 'messaging it to his bosom with his mutilated arms he continued his exhortations until finally he was killed by the swords of the enemy. His body was subsequently recovered by his friends and prayers pronounced over it by Ali in person ; after which, taking up a handful of dust, and scattering it towards the insurgents, that prince imprecated upon them the retribution of an avenging Deity. In the meantime, the impetuosity of Ali's followers could no longer be restrained. Drawing their swords and pointing their spears, they rushed impetuously to the combat, which was supported on all sides with extraordinary fierceness and animosity. "Price's Mohomedan History" quoted by S. Ockley p. 308.

¹ According to Tabari (Persian) by Talha.

Talha's fate

¹ During the heat of the battle when victory began to incline towards Ali, Marwan b. al-Hakam (Secy. of the late Caliph Osman) one of the officers in Ayesha's army, noticed Talha urging his troops to fight valiantly. 'Behold the traitor,' said he to his slave attendant, 'but recently he was one of the murderers of the aged Caliph, now he stands as the pretended avenger of his blood. What a mockery ! All to gain worldly grandeur.' So saying he in a fit of hatred and fury, shot Talha with an arrow which pierced his leg right through and struck his horse, who reared and threw the rider to the ground. In the anguish of the moment, Talha cried, "O God, take vengeance upon me for Osman according to Thy will !" And then called for help. Seeing his footwear full of blood, he asked one of his men to pick him up and put him on his horse and carry him to Busra. Finding his death approaching, he called one of Ali's men, who happened to be present, 'Give me thine hand,' said the dying penitent, "that I may put mine in it and by this act renew my oath of fealty to Ali." With these words Talha breathed his last. It touched the generous heart of Ali when he heard it, and he said, "Allah would not call him to heaven until He had blotted out his first breach of his word by this last vow of fidelity." Talha's son Mohammed was also killed in this battle.

¹ Rawdzat-al-Ahbab.

Zubeir's fate

Remorse and compunction had been aroused in the heart of Zubeir at Ali's reminding him of the Prophet's prophecy. He had no doubt entered into the battle at the instance of Ayesha and his own son, but his heart was heavy.¹ Now he saw that Ammar Yasir, the venerable old companion of the prophet, noted for his probity and uprightness, was the General in the Caliph's army, he recollected having heard from the Prophet's lips that Ammar was a person who would always be found on the side of justice and right and that he would fall under the sword of the rebels. It all looked ominous to Zubeir and with a boding spirit he withdrew from the field of battle and all alone took the road to Mecca. When he came to the valley crossed by the brook Saba where Ahnaf b. Qais was encamped with a horde of Arabs (as already mentioned), awaiting the issue of the battle, he was identified by Ahnaf at a distance. 'Cannot any one bring me tidings of Zubeir,' said he to his men. One of his men, Amr b. Jarmuz, understood the hint and immediately set off. Seeing him approach, Zubeir suspected some evil intent and bade him keep his distance. But after some argument they made friends and both dismounted to offer prayers as it was the time for prayers. When Zubeir prostrated himself in the prayers, Amr seized his opportunity and struck off Zubeir's head with a single stroke of his scimitar. He carried the head to Ali, who shed tears at the sight of it. It was the head of one who was once his friend. Turning to the man he said, 'Go' villain ! Carry thy news to Ibn Safiah in hell.' This unexpected malediction so enraged the wretch, who expected a reward, that he uttered a rhapsody of abuse upon Ali and in a fit of desperation he drew his sword and plunged it through his own heart.

¹ Ibn Athir.

Defeat of Ayesha

Such was the end of the two great leaders of the rebels. As to Ayesha, the implacable soul of the revolt, the vindictive lady was still screaming unceasingly with her shrill voice, "Slay the murderers of Osman," and urging her men to fight. But the troops, bereft of their leaders, had already lost heart and were falling back upon the city. Seeing, however, that she was in peril, they stayed their flight and turned to her rescue. Rallying round her camel, one after another rushed to seize the bridle and the standard, and one after another they were cut down. Thus seventy men perished by the bridle of the ill-fated animal. Her litter, steel-plated and constructed like a cage, bristled all over with darts and arrows, and the hump of the huge beast looked like a startled and angry hedgehog. "Convinced that the battle must remain in suspense as long as the camel continued to exhibit a rallying point to the defenders of Ayesha, Ali signified his desire to those around him that their efforts should be directed to bring down the animal. After repeated and desperate assaults, Malik-al-Ashtar succeeded at length in forcing a passage and immediately struck off one of the camel's legs. Malik smote another leg, and the camel immediately sank to the earth. The litter of Ayesha being thus brought to the ground, Mohammed, the son of Abubakr, was directed by Ali to take charge of his sister and protect her from being injured by the missiles which still flew from all quarters. He drew near accordingly, but when on introducing his hand into the litter and happening to touch that of Ayesha, she loaded him with abuse and execration, demanding what reprobate had presumed to stretch his hand where none but the Prophet's had been permitted. Mohammed replied that though it was the hand of her nearest in blood, it was also that of her bitterest enemy. Recognizing, however, the well known accents of her brother, the apprehensions of Ayesha were speedily dispelled." Price's Mohamedan History as quoted by S. Ockley p. 310.

Ali's magnanimity towards the enemy.

"Ayesha might have looked for cruel treatment at the hands of Ali, having been his vindictive and persevering enemy, but he was too magnanimous to triumph over a fallen foe." W. Irving's Succ. of Mohd. p. 197. When all the confusion of the battle was over, Ali came to her and asked her how she fared. Finding that she was all right and had escaped without injury, he reproachfully said to her, 'Had the Prophet directed thee to behave in this way ?' She replied, 'You are victorious, be good to your fallen foe.' Ali reproached her no more and gave instructions to her brother Mohammed, to take her to the house of Adballah b. Khalaf a Khozaite, who was a leading citizen of Busra and was killed fighting for Ayesha. She asked her brother to trace Abdallah, the son of Zubeir, who was subsequently found lying wounded on the battlefield among the dead and wounded. As desired by Ayesha, he was brought before Ali for pardon and forgiveness. The generous-hearted conqueror magnanimously announced general amnesty to all the rebels and their confederates along with Adballah b. Zubeir. In spite of all this, Marwan and the Umayyads fled to Moawiya in Syria and to Mecca.

Carnage in the battle

The losses in the battle were very great. Some historians say that 16,796 men of Ayesha's forces and 1,070 of Ali's army were killed in the battle. The field was covered all over with dead bodies. A trench was dug and the dead bodies of friends and foes together were buried by the order of the Caliph.

Retirement of Ayesha

When all was quiet, Ali sent Abdallah b. Abbas to ask Ayesha to go to Medina, but she declined, saying that she would not go to a place where the Bani Hashim dwelt. Some reproachful arguments passed between the two, after which Ibn Abbas came back to Ali and reported her refusal. Malik-al-Ashtar was then sent to her, but he too failed in his attempts to persuade her. Then Ali himself went to her and told her that she was required to sit quietly at her home where she should now go to take her abode in the place where the Prophet left her, forgetting the past. 'The Lord pardon thee,' he said, 'for what hath passed and have mercy upon thee.' But she paid no heed to his words. At last, he sent his son Hasan with the message that if she persisted in her refusal to go to her house in Medina, she would be treated in the way with which she was well acquainted. When Hasan visited her, she was dressing her hair, but hearing the message she was so perplexed that leaving her head half dressed she got up and ordered preparations for the journey. Hasan retired, but the ladies of the house enquired of her what it was the boy said that made her so uneasy after her rejecting Ibn Abbas, Malik-al-Ashtar and even Ali's suggestion. Then she narrated the incident when the ¹ Prophet had authorized Ali to divorce any of the Prophet's wives during his life or after. Hasan, said she, was the bearer of a warning from Ali to enforce that authority, which made her so uneasy. Ali made proper arrangements for Ayesha's journey and directed his two sons, Hasan and Husain, to escort her to a day's march, himself accompanying her for some distance.

"By the direction of Ali, Ayesha was escorted by a retinue of women (40 or 70), apparelled as men, and their familiar approach afforded a constant subject of complaint. On her arrival at Medina, however, she discovered the delicacy of the imposture, and became as liberal in her acknowledgments as she had before been in her reproaches." Price's Mohomedan History as quoted by S. Ockley p. 310.

It may not be out of place here to refer to the well-known tradition from Sahih Bokhari (translation by Wahiduzzaman part XII, Book of Jihad and Siyar page 68, Ahmedi Press, Lahore) wherein it is narrated The Holy Prophet pointing to the house of Ayesha, proclaimed three times that mischief will start from this house and the head of Satan will make its appearance from this very house." Needless to say that Ayesha's rebellious and irreligious action was in clear contravention of the mandate of God in Surah Ahzab verse 33 as also of the various exhortations of the Holy Prophet about this incident.

¹ Rawdhat-al-Ahbab; Habib-al-Siyar; A's= Kufi; Manqib-Murtazavi

The spoils of war.

It has been mentioned earlier that Ali had forbidden his army to seize any plunder. "So carefully were Ali's orders against plundering observed, that whatever was found on the field, or in the insurgent camp, was gathered together in the great mosque, and every man was allowed to claim his own. To the malcontents, who complained that they were not allowed to take the booty. Ali replied that the rights of war, in this case, lasted only so long as the ranks were arrayed against each other, and that immediately on submission, the insurgents resumed their rights and privileges as brother Muslims. Having entered the city, he divided the contents of the Treasury amongst the troops which had fought on his side, promising them a still larger reward should the Lord deliver Syria into his hands." Muirs Annals, p. 366.

Sir William on the battle of the Camel.

"The carnage in the ill-starred Battle of the Camel (for so it came to be called) was very great. The field was covered with over 10,000 bodies and this, notwithstanding that the victory was not followed up, for Ali had given orders that no fugitive should be pursued, nor any wounded soldier slain, nor plunder seized, or the privacy of any house invaded. A great Trench was dug, and into it the dead were lowered, friends and foes alike. Ali encamped for three days outside the city, and himself performed the funeral service. It was a new experience to bury the dead slain in battle not against the infidel, but Believer fighting against Believer. Instead of cursing the memory of his enemies (too soon the fashion in these civil wars), Ali spoke hopefully of the future state of such as had entered the field, on whatever side, with an honest heart."

Sir William Muir- The Caliphate, its Rise, Decline and Fall page 250.

Transfer of the seat of government.

Ali's stay in Busra was not long. Having appointed Abdallah b. Abas as Governor, the Caliph repaired to Kufa in the month of Rajab, 36 A.H. Apprehensive of Moawiya's designs against him, Ali considered Kufa suitably situated to check any encroachment in Iraq or Mesopotamia, and also in recognition of the assistance he had received from the Kufians, he transferred the seat of his government to Kufa from Medina and made it the centre of Islam and the capital of the Empire, as topographically it was in the centre of his dominions.

Ali's dominion.

The conspiracy of Ayesha, Talha and Zubeir having been crushed at the Khoreiba battlefield, this victory had given Ali complete sway over the territories from Khorasan in the east to Egypt in the west with the exception of the provinces in the north-west of Arabia, which were under the Governor of Syria viz. Moawiya.

CHAPTER XVII: BATTLE OF SIFFIN-BEFORE AND AFTER

Moawiya's preliminary activities and defiance of Ali

It has already been stated that during his sojourn at Medina on the occasion of his visit to Caliph Osman, Moawiya happened one day to ask Kab-al-Ahbar how the prevailing disturbances against Osman would end. Kab predicted that Osman would be murdered and that in the long run the Grey Mule (meaning Moawiya) would succeed in rising to power. Relying on this prophecy, Moawiya looked forward to chances of his rise to the sovereign authority and lost no opportunity of taking measures to promote the object in view. It was due to this that he was slack in sending succour¹ demanded by Osman when he was besieged; that, when Osman was murdered he was busy in stirring up the Syrians to avenge his blood by exhibiting from the pulpit the gory shirt of the murdered Caliph; that, to let the spirit of revolt ripen among the Syrians he long detained the envoy from Ali and evaded a definite answer to the invitation of the Caliph demanding homage from him; that, he gathered around him several discontented men of note, such as² Obeidallah (the son of Caliph Omar, the murderer who had escaped for fear of being summoned to the tribunal before Ali), Abdallah b. Abi Sarh (the ex-governor of Egypt who was displaced when Ali came to power), Marwan (the secretary and the evil genius of Caliph Osman) and almost all the immediate adherents of that Caliph, and the Umayyads who had fled to him when Ayesha was defeated at Busra; that, he secured the alliance of Amr b. Aas, the conqueror of Egypt and the ex-governor of that country, now residing in Palestine as a landlord but as a discontented man; (With the³ stipulation of this restoration to the same government as the reward for his successful co-operation in deposing Ali. he took the oath of allegiance to Moawiya acknowledging him the lawful Caliph, in the presence of all the army, who also took the oath of fealty. They were followed by the Syrian public who joined in the acclamations at this grand ceremony); that, he sought⁴ allegiance of several distinguished Companions of the Prophet, such as Saad b. Ali Waqqas, Abdallah b. Omar, Osama b. Zaid, Mohammed b. Maslama, who were noted for not having done fealty to Ali on his inauguration as Caliph, and who chose to remain aloof from either party and wrote reproachful answers to Moawiya. At this period Abu Horeira, Abu-al-Darda, Abu Osama Bahili and Noman b. Bashir Ansari were the only Companions in attendance at the court of Moawiya; that, being for over twenty years governor of the rich province of Syria and pursuing a far-sighted policy from the very beginning he had amassed an immense treasure and had a powerful army at his command. Now he had in his favour the prejudices of the Syrians in general and of his armies in particular, who had been artfully taught to implicate Ali in the murder of Caliph Osman. The blood-stained shirt of Osman was still hung over the pulpit in the great mosque of Damascus, and the people, inflamed by its sight, sobbed aloud and cried for vengeance on the murderers and those who sheltered them. Such was the formidable adversary with whom Ali had to deal after he had done with Ayesha, Talha and Zubair.

¹ Rawdhat-al-Safa.

² Rawdhat-al-Safa.

³ Mas'udi.

⁴ Habib-al-Siyar.

Ali's march to Syrian frontier

On being apprised of these developments in Syria, Ali once more tried (Shaban 36 A.H. or Jany. 657 A. D.) to use conciliatory means. He summoned Jarir, chief of Bani Bajila and Governor of Hamadan, to pay homage to him. The latter happened to be at Kufa. He was known to be on friendly terms with Moawiya. His return from Syria was anxiously awaited. At length¹ he came back after three months with an oral message from Moawiya that the

allegiance sought for could only be tendered if punishment were meted out to the murderers of Osman. Malik -al-Ashtar accused him of having wasted time in effeminate pleasures with Moawiya, who purposely kept him long enough to mature his plans of hostilities. Pretending to be offended with this imputation, Jarir left Kura and joined Moawiya.

Finding Moawiya hopelessly alienated, Ali resolved to march upon Syria without any further delay. In the month of Zil-qad 36 A. H. or April 657A. D. sending out a detachment as an advance guard to meet him at Riqqa, he himself with his army proceeded to Medaen. He despatched a contingent from Medaen and marched crossing the Mesopotamian desert.

The Miraculous fountain in the Mesopotamian desert

On his way he had to halt at a place where no water was available and the want of water was keenly felt by the army. A Christian hermit, who lived in a cave near the camping grounds, was sent for and asked to point out a well. He assured Ali that there was no well in the vicinity but there was a cistern near by, which contained not more than three buckets of rain water. Ali then said, 'I know, however, that some of the Bani Israel prophets of ancient times had fixed their abode in this place and had dug a pit for their stock of water.' The hermit replied that he also had heard of it, but it had been shut up for ages and all traces of it were lost; and that there was an old tradition that none but a prophet or one sent by a prophet would discover and re-open it.

"He then, says the Arabian tradition,² produced a parchment scroll written by Simeon bin Safa (Simon Cephus), one of the greatest apostles of Jesus Christ, predicting the coming of Muhammad, the last of the Prophets, and that this well would be discovered and re-opened by his lawful Heir and Successor. Ali listened with becoming reverence to this prediction ; then turning to his attendants and pointing to a spot, he said, 'dig there'. They dug, and after a time came to an immense stone, which having been removed with difficulty, the miraculous well stood revealed, affording a seasonable supply to the army, and furnishing an unquestionable proof of the legitimate claim of Ali as the Successor of the Prophet. The venerable hermit was struck with conviction; he fell at the feet of Ali, embraced his knees, and never afterwards would leave him." W. Irving's Successors of Mohamed p. 180.

Having offered thanks to God, and taking water sufficient for the army, Ali resumed his march. Crossing the Mesopotamian desert, he reached Riqqa on the banks of the Euphrates. A bridge of boats was constructed and the army 'crossing the river advanced westward, where it met the Syrian outposts at Sur-al-Rum. After some skirmishes between the vanguards of the two armies, the enemy gave way and Ali's army advancing forward came in sight of the main body of Moawiya's forces, already stationed at Siffin, (Zhilhadj 36 A. H. or May 657 A. D.). Tabri (Vol VI, page 577), Rawdzat-al-Safa Vol. II, page 425 and Orders to the Army before the battle of Siffin, Abul Fida (page 425) narrate in detail the orders issued by Hazrat Ali to his officers and soldiers before the battle. As these orders give a clear indication of the principles and methods laid down by Hazrat Ali as to how Jihad (Holy Wars) should be carried out, they are briefly given here:

¹ Ibn Khaldun.

² Rawdzat-al-Safa vol. ii, p. 292; Jame-al-Tawarikh, p. 183 etc. The Early History of Islam with special reference to the position of Ali, during the Life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and after. Chp. XXI Saiyid Safdar Hosain.

Ali's advise to the army before the battle of Siffin

1. *Never begin a war yourself, God does not like bloodshed; fight only in defence.*
2. *Never be first to attack your enemy, repulse his attacks, but do it boldly, bravely and courageously.*
3. *While declaring yourself and your deeds (Rajuz, a custom amongst hand to hand combatants engaged in a fight) never waste your time, and instead of speaking about yourself speak about God and the Holy Prophet (AS).*
4. *Never follow and kill those who run away from the battle or an encounter, life is dear to them, let them live.*
5. *Never kill wounded persons who cannot defend themselves.*
6. *Never strip naked a dead man for the sake of his coat of arms or dress.*
7. *Never cut the nose or the ears of the dead to humiliate them.*
8. *Never take to loot and arson.*

9. *Never molest or outrage the modesty of a woman.*
10. *Never hurt a woman even if she swears at you or hurts you.*
11. *Never hurt a child.*
12. *Never hurt an old and enfeebled person.*

Ali's camp at Siffin

The following interesting incident is related by Major Price as having taken place at the commencement of the war :-"As Siffin commanded, to a considerable distance, the only access to the waters of the Euphrates, Moawiya had stationed Abul Awr, one of his Generals, with ten thousand men, to guard the communication from the troops of Ali. He had not long placed his army in this advantageous position, when Ali, approached and pitched his Camp in the same neighbourhood soon found that their supply of water was intercepted.

Under these circumstances, Ali sent a deputation to Moawiya to request that he should relinquish an advantage which appeared very inconsistent assuring him that had he possessed the passage it would have been equally free to both the armies. Moawiya¹⁴ immediately made known the message to his courtiers, most of whom contended that as the murderers of 's1134.n had cut off all supplies of water when they besieged his palace, so on the present occasion it would only be just to retaliate. Amr. b. Aas, however, dissented from this opinion, declaring that Ali would not suffer his army to perish of thirst with the warlike legions of Iraq at his heels and the Euphrates before his eyes. But the first counsel prevailed, and the messenger was dismissed With the reply that Moawiya was resolved not to forego what he considered to be the forerunner of his future victory. The result of this application occasioned Ali considerable vexation and perplexity, till at length the privations became unbearable, and Malik-al-Ashtar and Ashas the son of Qais begged to be allowed to open the communication with their swords.

The fight for the waterway to the Euphrates

Permission being granted, and proclamation being made throughout the Camp, in less than an hour, ten thousand men had flocked to the Standard of Malik-al-Ashtar, and an equal number to the tent of Ashas. Directing these troops in a convenient order, each of the two chieftains conducted their army towards the channel of the Euphrates, and after vainly warning Abul Awr to quit the banks of the river, Malik at the head of the Cavalry and Ashas at the head of the Foot, immediately closed upon the enemy. During the action that followed, Malik was nearly exhausted with thirst and exertion, when a soldier by his side begged him to accept a draught of water, but the generous warrior refused to accept the indulgence till the sufferings of his followers had been allayed, and at the same time being assailed by the enemy, he laid seven of their bravest soldiers to the sword. But the raging thirst of Malik and his troops became at length unbearable, and he directed all that were furnished with water bags to follow him through the ranks of their opponents without quitting his person until they should have filled all their vessels. Piercing the line of the adverse party, Malik made good his way to the river whilst his followers supplied themselves with water. The conflict raged with unabated fury near the Euphrates, till Abul Awr, finding his troops give way before the relentless attack of their assailants, and being already beaten from his post, despatched a messenger to Moawiya who immediately sent Amr b. Aas with three thousand horsemen to his relief.

Malik-al-Ashtar wins the day

The arrival of that General, however, seems to have rendered the victory of Malik more signal and decisive. No sooner did the latter descry the approach of Amr than, covering himself with his shield, he urged his courser towards him with irresistible impetuosity, and Amr only eluded the fury of his adversary by retiring within the ranks of the Syrians. The latter, however, were put to the sword in great numbers, many were drowned in the Euphrates, whilst the remainder fled for refuge to the camp of Moawiya and the troops of Ali having thus successfully dislodged the enemy, established themselves in quiet possession of the watering place and its approaches. Smarting under the reproaches of Amr, Moawiya now found himself reduced to the necessity of applying to his adversary for the indulgence which he had so recently withheld; but Ali, with the liberality and magnanimity so congenial to his troops allowed his enemy a free access to the Euphrates, and from this time the followers of either army passed and re-passed to the river with equal confidence and freedom of intercourse." S. Ockley's History of Saracens p. 312.

Desultory fighting for one month

Ali divided his forces, which numbered 90,000, into seven columns, each commanded by a companion of the Prophet or a Chieftain of renown. The Commanders were; Ammar Yasir, Abdallah b. Abbas, Qais b. Saad b. Obada, Adballah b. Jafar, Malik-al-Ashtar, Ashas b. Qais Kindi and Said b. Qais Hamdani.

Moawiya had similarly divided his men, 1,20,000 which greatly outnumbered the army of Ali, into seven or eight columns under the following commanders : Amr b. Aas, Abdallah b. Amr b. Aas, Obeidallah b. Omar, Abul Awr, Zhul Kala Homeiri, Abd-al-Rahman b. Khalid b. Walid, and Habib b. Maslama. Every day one of these columns from each army took the field by turn and engaged in skirmishing or single combat, in which case only one champion from each side fought till the heat of the sun became intolerable. In this way the contest was kept up for the whole month of Zilhajj, as Ali was desirous to avoid serious loss of the Muslims in a decisive battle.

The next year (37 A.H.) set in and as fighting was forbidden, in Moharram (the first month), both the armies lay encamped in sight of one another without any activity. During this month of truce Ali earnestly wished to conciliate Moawiya in order to avert the impending crisis and re-opened negotiations. The whole month passed in sending or receiving deputations but all to no purpose. Ali clearly pointed out that, as Caliph, he was ready to vindicate the majesty of the Divine Law on the murderers of Osman, if they were only named by Moawiya. But Moawiya, entertaining ambitious designs upon the Caliphate under cover of the pretended revenge of the blood of Osman, which had so far been his strength and had secured him so big an army, would not accede to any terms before the murderers of Osman were exterminated.

Furious battles at Siffin

The hostilities were resumed with the beginning of the next month (Safar, 37 A.H.). For a week the battles raged with unceasing fury till sunset separated the contesting parties. Every day the conflict became severe! and more embittered. In the second week Ali made up his mind for a decisive engagement. The authorities quoted by Price, enter very minutely into various individual contests which took place during this protracted campaign. ¹ "In several of these Ali was personally engaged; but his extraordinary strength and skill was so well known to the opposite party, that he was obliged to disguise himself before an assailant would attack him. On one occasion, being mounted on the horse and arrayed in the armour of one of his Chiefs, he was attacked by a warrior from Moawiya's army; and we are told that with a single sweep of his scimitar, the Caliph severed the upper half of his body from the lower. It is said that such was the keenness and temper of the steel, and the rapidity and precision of the stroke, that the man thus severed in twain continued fixed in the saddle ; the spectators concluded that Ali had missed his blow, until the horse chanced to move, when the two halves of the body fell to the ground."

Ammar's fall in the Battle

"The carnage, chiefly in the ranks of Moawiya, was very great in these battles. Among the ranks of Ali the loss of certain distinguished Companions was regretted by friends and foes alike. Ammar Yasir was deeply grieved when Hashim b. Obta, the hero of Qadisia fell fighting by his side. As he saw Hashim fall, he exclaimed to his fellows : 'O Paradise How close thou couchest beneath the arrow's point and the falchion's flash ! O Hashim even now I see heaven opened, and black-eyed maidens, all bridally attired, clasping thee in their fond embrace.' So singing, and refreshing himself with his favourite draught of milk and water, the aged warrior, fired again with the ardour of youth, rushed into the enemy's ranks and met the envied fate. People remembered very well the words of the Holy Prophet, who had said 'O Ammar, thou shalt one day be slain by a godless and rebellious race', in other words the saying was interpreted, as 'Ammar would be killed fighting on the side of right.' Thus his death, as it were, condemned the cause of the ranks against whom he fought; and so it spread dismay in Moawiya's forces. When Amr b. Aas heard of it, he answered readily : 'And who is it that bath killed Ammar, but Ali the rebellious, who brought him hither ?' The clever repartee ran through the Syrian host, and did much to efface the evil omen.' Muir's Annals p. 382. Other versions of Ammar's last words run as follows : 'The thirsty man longeth for water and here, close by, it wellet up. Descend to the spring (death) and drink. This is the joyful day of meeting with friends, with Muhammad and his Companions.' Wackidi quoted in Muir's Annals p. 382. "By Allah ! I do not know a deed more pleasing to God than to war against these lawless vagabonds. I would fight them even if I was assured of being run through with a lance ; for the death of a martyr, and the paradise beyond, are only to be acquired in the ranks of Ali. However courageously our enemies may fight, still justice is on our side ; they desire not to revenge Osman's death, but ambition drives them to revolt."

"Follow me, Companions of the Prophet! The gates of Heaven are opened, and houries are waiting to receive us. Let us triumph here, or meet Muhammad and his friends in Paradise !" With these words he gave his charger the lash, and plunged with desperate violence into the hottest of the fight, till, at length, he was surrounded by the Syrians, and fell a sacrifice to his own courage. His death stirred up Ali's troops to revenge, whilst even the Syrians regretted his loss, from the high esteem in which Ammar had been held by the Prophet. Well, Geschichte der Chalifen quoted in Ockley's History of the Saracens p. 314. Beholding Ammar fall, Moawiya cried to Amr b. Aas, who was sitting by him, 'Do you see, what precious lives are lost in our dissensions ?' "see" ! exclaimed Amr, 'would to God I had not lived to see such a catastrophe.' Ammar Yasir, the patriarch of Muslim chivalry was ninety-three years of age; he had served the Prophet in Badr and in several other engagements. He was now Ali's General of the Horse. He was respected as long as he lived and died lamented by all. Having fallen wounded by a lance of Jowier Oskoni, he was brought to his tent where Ali, taking his head into his lap, shed tears of sorrow and offered prayers for the dead friend.

1 S. Ockley's History of the Saracens p. 314.

Ali's furious charge on the Enemy

Ali was very much annoyed and grieved at the loss of his brave General and friend. Putting himself at the head of twelve thousand of his Cavalry, he made a furious charge on the enemy, trying to reach Moawiya, whose pavilion was surrounded by five compact rows of his own body-guard behind the lines of the fighting ranks. Breaking the ranks, Ali confronted the body guard. They also could not withstand the terrible shock of the charge. All the rows were broken up and coming within ear shot of Moawiya, Ali called him saying : 'Come forth O Moawiya How long shalt the blood of the Muslims flow over the battle-field in the strife between us two? Let us have a duel and let God decide our fate, whoever kills his adversary shalt be the master.' 'Fairly spoken,' said Amr b. Aas to Moawiya and he urged him to accept the challenge, telling him that his refusal would discredit him forever. But sneering at Amr, Moawiya replied that the provocation was prudently made to secure for him the Government of Syria, because he knew fully well that Ali's antagonist in fight never escaped death.

Scandalous plight of Amr B. AS

¹ "Amr b. Aas, however, did not seem to possess a much larger share of personal valour than Moawiya on this occasion. Price tells us that a short time afterwards, Ali, having changed his armour and disguised himself, again appeared in the lists. Unconscious of his identity, Amr b. Aas advanced a few steps, and Ali, pretending as if a little frightened, still further encouraged him to proceed. They were both on horse-back, and as Amr neared his foe, he repeated certain bragging lines, importing discomfiture and havoc he intended to carry into the enemy's army, even though a thousand such as Ali were numbered in their ranks. Ali replied in a strain which rather unexpectedly announced his identity. Away went Amr b. Aas, without a moment's delay, whipping and spurring as fast as possible, whilst Ali pursued with the utmost eagerness, and making a well directed plunge, the point of his lance passed through the skirts of Amr's coat of mail, and brought him, head foremost, to the earth. Unfortunately as Amr wore no drawers, and his heels were in the air, that part of his person became exposed which we shall forbear to particularise. In this situation Ali scorned to do him any further injury, and suffered him to escape with the contemptuous remark, that he was never to forget the circumstance to which he was indebted for life and safety.

1. S. Ockley's His. of Sar. P. 315.

Fiercely contested battle

¹ "One day, towards the close of the campaign, Ali prepared for battle with unusual solemnity. Clad in the Prophet's mail and turban, and mounted on the Prophet's horse, Riah, he brought out the old and venerated Standard of Muhammad. The appearance of the sacred relic, now worn to shreds, brought sobs and tears from the illustrious Companions who had so often fought and conquered under its shadow, and the enthusiastic troops drew out in formidable strength beneath the holy banner. Moawiya had assembled twelve thousand of the best warriors of Syria, when Ali, sword in hand, rushed upon them at the head of his impetuous veterans to the cry of Allah-o-Akbar, and threw the enemy into immediate confusion. The Syrians at length recovered from the disorder. The tribe of Awk on the side of Moawiya and that of Hamdanites on the part of Ali, each made a solemn vow never to quit the field whilst one of their opponents remained to dispute it. A dismal slaughter among the bravest of both armies was the result. Heads rolled and streams of blood polluted the field in all directions; but in the issue, the Syrians suffered a total defeat, and retired in the utmost confusion."Price's Mohammedan History.

1 S. Ockley's His. of Sar. p. 315.

Decisive battles at Siffin and the valiant fight of Malik-Al-Ashtar

The battles of Siffin at last were fought desperately on the 11th, 12th and 13th of Safar, 37 A.H. War continued raging in the moonlit night of 13th rather more furiously than in the day. Like the night of Qadisia field, this night was called a second Lailat-al-Harir or 'Night of Clangour.' Malik-al-Ashtar mounted on a piebald horse, wielding a two-edged broad sword repeatedly shouted Allah-o-Akbar. At every stroke of his terrible scimitar was a warrior cleft down. History has it that he was heard to utter this exclamation no less than four hundred times during the night. The hero of the battle, resolved on victory, was pushing his attacks with sustained vigour and persistence. The morning dawned more disadvantageous to the Syrians, who were pressed hard to their encampment by the brave assailants. Moawiya, who was eyeing the field with great anxiety grew more and more nervous when the ranks of his body-guard were cut to pieces. He despairingly be-thought himself of flight and even called for his horse, when Amr b. Aas, who stood by, said to him : 'Courage, Moawiya, do not be disheartened I have devised means to avert the crisis. Call the enemy to the Word of God by raising aloft the Holy Book. If they accept, it will lead to thy victory; if any refuse to abide thereby, it will sow discord amongst them.'

Trick to avert the crisis

Moawiya eagerly caught at the words, and in a moment five hundred copies of the Quran were raised aloft at the point of the lance. 'Behold', cried they, 'the Book of God, let it decide our differences.' This stratagem produced a magical effect on ² Ashath b. Qais and his followers and some Kufians, as if the artifice was anxiously awaited by them. They at once leaped forward and with one voice re-echoed the cry, 'The Book of God, let it decide our differences,' and they dropped their weapons. Hearing the tumult, Ali stepped forth and remonstrated with them : 'It is a trick' he said, 'afraid of defeat the evil men have sought their safety by guile.' 'What !' they cried, 'Do you refuse to submit to the decision of the Quran to which they call you ?' 'That it is,' said Ali, 'which I have been fighting so long to bring them to, but they rebelled. Go on and fight your enemy. I know Moawiya, Amr b. Aas, Ibn Abi Sarh, Habib and Dzohak better than you do.' ³ They have no regard for the religion or the Quran.' 'Whatever that might be,' they persisted, 'but we are now called to the Quran and we must not decline it.' Thus they would not listen to any argument. At last in a revolting attitude, they threatened the Caliph. that unless he agreed, they would all desert him, or deliver him into the hands of his enemies, or serve him as Osman was served. Further protest with such determined soldiery being of no avail, Ali said : 'Hold your mild and treasonable language, obey me and fight, but if you are intent upon disobedience, do as you like.' They refused obedience and pressed Ali to call back Malik-al-Ashtar from the field. These men turned Sectaries and are known in the history of Islam as Kharijities. Malik-al-Ashtar, being summoned, at first refused, saying, 'I cannot leave the field as victory is at hand.' On this answer of Malik the tumult of the Kharijites increased, insisting on Ali to call him back at once. He then again sent for Al-Ashtar, saying 'Of what avail is victory when treason is rife in my own camp. Come back at once before I am murdered or delivered over to the enemy.' Malik-al-Ashtar reluctantly gave in and hurried to the Caliph. A fierce altercation ensued between him and the angry soldiery. 'Ye were fighting', he said, 'but yesterday for the Lord, and the choicest among you lost their lives. What is it but that ye now acknowledge yourselves in the wrong, and the martyrs gone to hell ?' 'Nay,' they answered, 'it is not so. Yesterday we fought for the Lord, and today, also for the Lord, we stay the fight. On this Ashtar upbraided them as traitors, cowards, hypocrites, and villains. In return they reviled him, and struck his charger with their whips. Ali interposed. The tumult was stayed." Muir's Annals p. 384.

¹ Masudi.

² Rawdzat-al-Safa.

³ Ibn Khaldun.

Proposals for arbitration

¹ Ash'ath b. Qais Kindi, stepping forth from amongst the Kharijites, asked permission of Ali to visit Moawiya to enquire of him what his precise meaning was in raising the Quran aloft. He went to Moawiya and on his return said that Moawiya and his party wished that the differences should be left to the arbitration of two umpires, who might decide it according to the true sense of the Quran, each party to nominate an umpire and their verdict to be final. Ali was questioned, "Ash'ath the son of Qais, one of those who had the greatest credit and influence among the soldiers of Iraq, and whose fidelity was suspected ², had been bribed by Moawiya. "How do you approve of this expedient." Ali answered him coldly, saying, "He that is not at liberty cannot give his advice. It belongs to you to manage this affair according as you shall think fit among yourselves." S. Ockley's History of the Saracens p. 317. The army, however, determined to follow it, shouted assent; and they named Abu Musa-al-Ashari, the late Governor of Kufa who was deposed by Ali for his disloyalty. 'This man,' said Ali, surprised at the designation, 'has already forsaken

us; neither hath he now been fighting with us. The son of the Prophet's uncle viz. Abdallah b. Abbas can preferably be chosen instead.' 'More preferably,' they ironically answered, 'name thy own self, why namest thou thy cousin?' They said they would have none but one who would deal impartially between him and Moawiya. Ali then proposed Malik Al-Ashtar, but they obstinately forced him to accept none other than Abu-Musa as his representative. It was a bitter choice for Ali, but he had no alternative. Abu Musa had kept aloof from the battle, but must have been in the neighbourhood. When told of the arbitration, he exclaimed, 'The Lord be praised who hath stayed the fighting !' 'But thou art appointed arbiter on our side.' 'Alas ! Alas !' he cried; and so in much trepidation, he repaired to Ali's camp. Ahnaf Ibn Qais asked to be appointed joint umpire with Abu-Musa, who, he said, was not the man to stand alone, nor had he tact and wit enough for the task :- 'There is not a knot which Abu-Musa can tie, but I will unloose the same; nor a knot he can unloose, but I will find another still harder to unravel.' This was too true but the army was in an insolent and perverse mood, and would have none but Abu-Musa. The Syrian arbiter was Amr b. Aas for whose deep and crafty ways Abu-Musa was no match." Muir's Annals. p. 385.

1. Ash'ath is the same man who in 17 A. H. had travelled all the way from Iraq to Kinnisrin in Syria in expectation of bounty from Khalid b. Walid, who gave him 1000 pieces of gold.

2. According to Rawdzat-al-Safa a gift of one hundred thousand dirhams was promised by Moawiya to Ash'ath.

The Deed of arbitration

¹ The two referees (Abu-Musa and Amr b. Aas), having presented themselves in Ali's camp, a truce was put in writing. Dictated by Ali, it was begun thus : the name of God , the most Gracious and Merciful. This is what had been agreed upon between the Commander of the Faithful, Ali. and Moawiya.' Amr b. Aas objected to this and said, 'Ali is your commander but not ours; write down simple names Ali and Moawiya.' Upon this Ali, remembering the prophecy uttered by the Prophet at Hodaibiya, told the people around him that a similar objection was raised by the Quraish to delete the words, 'Apostle of God' appended to the name of the Prophet in the Treaty; that the Prophet yielded and erased out the words with his own hands when he saw me hesitating; that he then predicted that, 'the day will come when I shall also have to yield to make a similar concession.' Hearing this, Amr b. Aas cried out, 'Dost thou represent our similarity to the pagan Arabs in spite of our being good believers!' 'And when,' said Ali, 'an evil-born son had not been a friend of the wicked and a foe of the righteous ?' Upon this Amr swore that he would never again seek the company of Ali, and Ali expressed his wish that God may keep him free of such a companion. However, Ali yielded and the truce was written with simple names of Ali and Moawiya, and signed, by which the contracting parties bound themselves to ratify and confirm the decision of the referees, which was to be determined some six or eight months later at some place midway between Kufa and Damascus. The umpires swore that they would judge righteously in accordance with the Holy Book and without regard to partiality. This deed of arbitration was executed on Wednesday, the 13th Safar, 37 A. H. or 31st July, 657 A. D.

1 Rawdzat-al-Sala; Habib-al-Siyar 180

The Carnage at Siffin

¹ Ninety battles were fought at Siffin. The carnage had been very great. Most of the historians give the number of the slain on both sides, from first to the last, as seventy thousand. Of these forty five thousand were Syrians and twenty-five thousand Iraqians. Ammar Yasir, Hashim b. Otba, Khazima b. Thabit, Abdallah b. Bodail and Abul Hathim b. Teihan were the leading chiefs killed on Ali's side, while the men of distinction killed on Moawiya's side were Zhul-Kala Homeiri, Obeidallah b. Omar, Hoshab b. Zhi-Tzalim and Habis b. Saad-al-Tai.

Return of the armies

The truce having been arranged, Moawiya escaped a defeat and gained his point for the present with bright hopes for the future. The armies having buried their dead, left the ill-starred battle-field. Moawiya retired to Damascus and Ali repaired to Kufa.

Decision of the umpires

The time for arbitration having come, the umpires proceeded to Dumat-al-Jondel or Azroh, each with a retinue of four hundred horsemen according to the agreement. Many a leading Chief from Mecca, Medina, Iraq and Syria went there to watch the proceedings, which were to decide the future of Islam. Abdallah b. Abbas, who accompanied Abu-Musa to preside at the daily prayers, while having a discourse with Abu-Musa upon the topic of arbitration, urged him to beware of the crafty ways of his astute colleague and to keep particularly in his mind the fact that Ali had no blemish to render him incapable of government, nor Moawiya any virtue to qualify him for it.

When Abu-Musa reached Duma, Amr b. Aas received him with great respect. A private conference was held between the two alone in a pavilion erected for the purpose. Amr was already well aware of the weaknesses in Abu-Musa's character. He treated Abu-Musa with utmost respect and civility till he brought him completely under his influence. Having won his confidence, he made him admit that Osman was foully murdered. Then he asked him why the avenger of his blood, a near relation of his and an able administrator viz. Moawiya should not be taken as his successor. To this Abu-Musa replied that the succession should not be determined on such a basis which would give preference to Osman's sons as legitimate claimants; but that they must above all things take care lest a mutiny should be kindled or civil wars break again. Upon this Amr b. Aas asked Abu-Musa to reject both Ali and Moawiya, and let the Faithful elect a third. This is the simplest and safest solution of the problem. 'I agree,' said Amr, 'let us go forth to pronounce.' A tribunal was erected from which each of the umpires was to declare publicly his decision. Abu-Musa wished Ann to go up first, but Amr, alleging reasons to give preference to Ali's man, overcame all his scruples and insisted upon Abu-Musa going up first. Abu-Musa ascended and addressed the people thus : 'Brethren ! I and Amr b. Aas, both of us, have given full consideration to the matter and have come to the conclusion that no other course to restore peace and to remove discord from the people can possibly be better than to depose both Ali and Moawiya in order that people may have their choice of a better man in their stead. I therefore depose both Ali and Moawiya from the Caliphate to which they pretend, in the manner as I draw this ring from my finger.' Having made this declaration Abu-Musa came down. Amr b. Aas now took his turn and went up to announce what he had to declare. 'You have heard,' he said, 'how Abu-Musa on his part has deposed his chief Ali; I, on my part, do depose him too and I invest my chief Moawiya with the Caliphate and I confirm him to it, as I put this ring upon my finger. I do this with justice because Moawiya is the avenger of Osman and his rightful successor.' So saying, he came down. This arbitration took place in the month of Ramazan , 37 A.H. or February 658 A. D.

Amazement at the decision

The audience were quite amazed at the unexpected issue of the arbitration. Neither the Kufians dreamt of Amr b. Aas so shamefully over-reaching Abu-Musa, nor the Syrians ever thought of Moawiya achieving such a triumph. Abu-Musa, confounded and bewildered, assailed from every side, said, 'What can I do, I have been duped by Amr, who first agreed with me then swerved aside.' As much as the Syrians applauded the decision, the Kufians were enraged by it. In the heat of his indignation, Shureih, the commander of the Kufa escort, rushed upon Amr b. Aas and was roughly handling him when the people interposed and set them apart to have recourse only to mutual revilings. Laughed at by the Syrians and reproached by the Kufians, Abu-Musa felt deeply ashamed of having been outwitted by his colleague. Apprehending mischief, he made good his escape and fled to Mecca, where he thenceforth lived in obscurity and was not heard of any more, though he died in 42 A. H. or according to others in 52 A. H.

"Many of the angry speeches at Duma by the chief men, who were bewildered at the strange denouement have been preserved. These are some of them: The son of Omar : 'See what a pass Islam hath come to. Its great concern committed to two men : one who knoweth not right from wrong, the other a nincompoop.' Abubekr's son : 'Would that Abu-Musa had died before this affair; it had been better for him.' Abu-Musa himself is represented as abusing Amr in the language of the Quran : 'His likeness is as the likeness of a dog, if they drive him away, he putteth forth his tongue, and if thou leave him alone, still he putteth forth his tongue.' (Sur. VII-771. 'And thou,' retorted Amr, 'art like the donkey laden with books, and none the wiser for it.' (Sur. VI-25). Shureih, Commander of the Kufa escort, flew at Amr, and they belaboured each other with their whips till they were separated by the people. Shureih exclaimed that he only wished he had used his sword instead. Muir's Annals p. 394.

Amr b. Aas returned to Damascus, where Moawiya, amidst the acclamations of joy, was saluted Caliph by the Syrians. Henceforward Moawiya's interests began to prosper, and the prediction of Kab-al-Ahbar appeared to be fulfilled.

Abu 'Moosa retired to Medina where he subsequently received a handsome yearly pension from the court of Moawiya. (Refer Tabari, Abul Fida, Ausam-e-Koofi, Rawdzat-al-Safa, Morooj-ul-Zahab, Kamil-ibne-Aseer and The Short History of the Saracen.)

¹ Abul Fida

Dr. Crichton describes Ali's prowess at the battle of Siffin

¹ "Ninety actions or skirmishes are recorded to have taken place ; and in these the humanity of Ali was as conspicuous as his valour. He strictly enjoined his troops invariably to await the first onset of the enemy, to spare the fugitives, and respect the virtues of female captives. Not a day passed in which he displayed not some extraordinary feat of personal strength and skill. The bravest leaders of the Syrian host fell in succession by the single prowess of his resistless arm- "For death itself dwelt on the point of his spear, and perdition in the hilt of the sword." "The hideous and gigantic Kerreib, who could obliterate with his thumb the impression of a silver coin, he cleft at one stroke from the crest to the saddle-bow. Two warriors attacked him in disguise, but with a sweep of his double scimitar he bisected the foremost through the middle with such rapidity and precision that the rider remained fixed on the saddle; the spectators concluding he had missed his blow, until the motion of the horse threw the body in halves to the ground."

1 Dr Andrew Crichton. History of Arabia and its people p. 307. Publishers Nelsons & Sons, London Ed. 1852.

CHAPTER XVIII: THE KHARIJITES

Who were the Kharijites

The truce having been concluded on 13th Safar, 37 A.H. at San, when Ali was returning homeward with his army, a body of 12,000 men had separated themselves from the ranks and marched at some little distance in the same direction as the main body towards Kufa. They murmured at the compromise agreed upon, and were even loud in their reproaches to one another for having abandoned the cause of the Faith to the ungodly compromise. These were the Kharijites (Kharijite means one who rebels against the established tenets of a religion, a votary or schismatic or seceder), who had refused fighting at the battlefield after the trick played by the enemy, and had pressed the Caliph to accept the arbitration and the particular arbitrator. Approaching Kufa, these seceders encamped at a village named Harora in the vicinity of Kufa. Their religious notions were developed into fanatic zeal that the Believers were all of equal standard and nobody should exercise authority over another. They formulated their creed with the phrase 'La hukm ilia lillah,' i.e. no judgment but Lord's alone; consequently there should be no Caliph, nor an oath of allegiance sworn to any human being. They blamed Ali as having sinned in consenting to refer to human judgment that which belonged to God alone, and demanded of him repentance for his apostasy. They said that Ali ought not to have given quarter to the enemy, who could be pursued and put to the sword. Proceeding to their camp, the Caliph firmly remonstrated with them, that they had given wrong interpretation to the phrase 'La hukm ilia lillah' and that in accepting the arbitration he had followed the provisions contained in the Quran ; and that he had committed no sin to repent of. He pointed out that the sin lay at their own door, because with their persistent obstinacy they refused to continue fighting with the enemy and that with their revolting attitude they forced him to call back Malik-al-Ashtar, who was beating the enemy back to their camp and was at the point of gaining a complete victory; and that they pressed him to accept the arbitration and the particular arbitrator. He further added that he however expected arbitrators were to be fully bound by the terms of the truce to deliver their judgment righteously in accordance with the Quran ; and that. if the judgment turned out to be in disregard of righteousness, he would at once reject it and would again set out against the enemy. Concluding, he said that it was wrong of them if they desired him to break the truce, which they themselves had driven him to arrange. To all this reasoning they simply answered, 'we do admit of our sin, but we have repented of our apostasy; and thou must repent of it likewise.' To this Ali replied that he being a true believer he would not belie himself by admitting his apostasy.

Their revolt 37 A.H.

The Kharijites were not satisfied and they resolved on rebellion; but awaiting the issue of the umpire's decision, they for the present postponed any overt action. Soon after the judgment of the arbitrators, they determined to raise the standard of revolt and prevailed on Abdallah b. Wahab, one of their chiefs, to accept (contrary to the principles of their creed) the command, as a temporary expedient, to meet the emergency. Fixing their headquarters at Nahrwan, a few miles from Baghdad , in the month following the arbitration, they secretly began to leave and to meet at the rendezvous, either singly or in small batches for fear of raising an alarm. Some five hundred malcontents from Busra also joined the insurgents at Nahrwan. In the meantime, Ali, having received intelligence of the deceitful arbitration at Duma, took little notice of these fanatic zealots, his thoughts being more occupied with the affairs of Moawiya and raising levies for Syria for the renewal of hostilities. Hearing about the Kharijite insurgents, Ali wrote to them that as he was preparing to march against Moawiya, it was high time for them to join his standard. To this they sent an insulting reply that they had cast him off as an ungodly heretic unless he

acknowledged his apostasy and repented thereof, in which case they would see whether anything could be arranged between them.

The battle of Nahrwan.

Ali had commenced his march on Syria when he received tidings that the Kharijites had attempted a raid on Madaen but were beaten back to their camp; that they were committing horrible outrages in the country all around their camp, condemning as impious all those who did not fall in with their sentiments; that they had put to death a traveller who refused to accept their creed, and ripped up his wife who was with child. The followers of the Caliph, whose families were left behind unprotected at Kufa, apprehending danger from these barbarous fanatics desired that before proceeding to Syria these outlaws should be dealt with first. A messenger was sent to make enquiries but he too was put to death by them. Seeing the attitude of the insurgents, Ali thought that immediate measures to check them were necessary ; he therefore changed his course eastward, crossed the Tigris and approaching Nahrwan sent a messenger to demand of them the surrender of the murderers. They replied that no particular person was responsible; and they all deserved equal merits for the blood of the apostates slain by them. Still Ali, avoiding bloodshed, tried to win over these misguided fanatics by gentle means. He had, therefore, a standard planted outside his camp and a proclamation made that the malcontents rallying round it or those who retired to their homes would be safe. The rebels began to disperse, deserting their camp, till Abdallah b. Wahab was left with only 1800 adherents, who resolved to fight against the Caliph at any cost. Ali said that those men were the true Kharijites, who would go forth against Islam as quick as an arrow from the bow. At last, headed by their leader, Abdallah b. Wahab, they desperately rushed upon Ali's army and met their fate. All of them were slain except only nine, who escaped to serve as firebrands to rekindle the future fire. On Ali's side only seven men were killed. The zealots, who had escaped, promulgated their creed and cause in secret at Busra and Kufa and appeared in the following year in bands of fanatic insurgents but were easily put to flight or cut to pieces.

Syrian expedition frustrated

The Kharijites having been disposed of at Nahrwan, Ali retraced his steps towards the Tigris which he recrossed with his army to march upon Syria, but the Chiefs of his followers urged him to give the army some rest preparatory to the long journey and to enable them to refit their armour for war against the well equipped enemy. Ali consented to the proposal. They marched back towards Kufa and encamped at Nokheila in the vicinity of the town. A proclamation was made that any one who had any business in the town may leave the Camp for one day returning on the next. In a short time the Camp was almost empty of its soldiers, who all went one after the other to the town. None returning the next day, Ali became impatient and at length himself entering the town harangued the people to go forth with him to the Syrian expedition, but no response was forthcoming and nobody came forward. The Caliph was disappointed and at last the project for the expedition had to be abandoned, never to be resumed.

The period of Ali's Caliphate was one of continued struggles. He was never left to live in peace. The revolt of Ayesha, Talha and Zubeir; the rebellion and treacherous outrages of Moawiya and Amr b. Aas; the risings of the Kharijite fanatics; the lukewarmness and apathy of his own people; the unfaithfulness of his, cousin Abdallah b. Abbas, and last of all, the defection of his own brother LWI affected his spirits a great deal. These troubles crowding rapidly one upon another entirely disturbed his mind.

From the day of his forced ascension to the Caliphate to the last day of his life, Hazrat Ali did not get a day's rest and peace. It is a wonder how against heavy odds he could get time to introduce reforms in the government, to lay down fundamentals of grammar for the Arabic language, to deliver sermons on theology, on rhetorics, on philosophy of religion, on wonders of creation and nature, and on duties of man to God and man; to advise people in the most persuasive manner to suppress the tendencies for innovation and schism which had crept in the minds of the Muslims, or to introduce and to bring into effect principles of a benign government.

The death of Malik Ashtar and Mohammad Abubakr

After dealing with the revolt of the Kharijites, Hazrat Ali had to face the problem of consolidating his control over Egypt. He had sent Qais-Ibne-Saad as Governor of Egypt but had to call him back and to send Mohammad Ibne-Abubakr in his stead. Unfortunately, Mohammad though brave and sincere was no match for Moawiya and Omar-Ibne-Aas. He was forced by Moawiya into battle. He wrote to Hazrat AR who sent Malik-al-Ashtar for his help. But Malik could not reach Egypt; he was poisoned on the way by a henchman of Moawiya and he died. (Tabari, Vol. IV, page 521), Mohammad was informed of his death. That young man faced Omar. Ibne-Aas alone, was defeated in the encounter, and killed, and by the orders of Moawiya his dead body was burnt and his ashes were strewn (Tabari, Vol IV, page 592). Hazrat Ali's words at the news of the death of Mohammad showed how he loved the

young man and how the youth loved him. After him Hazrat Ali had to send some experienced officer to Egypt. He was busy with that problem when Moawiya organised bands of guerillas with orders for loot, murder, arson and rape. These bands were to attack, like surging waves, the provinces of Hijaz, Busra Raay, Mosul and Herat. Hazrat Ali organised defences of these provinces, defeated these bands and freed the country from their harassment.

It was very easy for Hazrat Ali to channelize the minds of the masses towards foreign invasion. It had always been done by rulers and is even today considered the best form of diverting the energies of a rising nation, as well as the easiest way to extend one's territory and to propagate religion. But Hazrat Ali hated bloodshed, did not believe in imperialism, and had no faith in propagation of religion with the sword in one hand and the Quran in the other. He believed Islam to be a message of Peace and Love and wanted mankind to be ruled on the basis of equity and justice. Therefore, after strengthening one province after another and fortifying their defences, he got busy in introducing reforms to create a benign temporal state and never seriously thought of expanding his domain.

CHAPTER XIX: HIS VIRTUES AND EXCELLENCE

The Ideal Ruler

Hazrat Ali's administration was such that it could serve as a model even to modern governments, not excepting those of the most advanced countries.

It was a rare coincidence, with few parallels in History, that a country, so steeped in superstition and ignorance as Arabia was at the dawn of the seventh century of the Christian era, should have produced an ideal and humanitarian ruler like Hazrat Ali whose government, even to-day, stands as a pattern of wise, simple and incorruptible administration.

When Hazrat Ali was called to the helm of the Muslim Commonwealth, his first act on assuming responsibility as a Caliph was to dismiss all corrupt governors and state officers who had fastened upon the provinces like famished leeches, heaping up wealth by means of pitiless extortion. Hazrat Ali had been advised by his friends to defer the dismissal of the corrupt men until he was firmly secured against all enemies. "But the Bayard of Islam," to use Major Osborn's words, "the hero without fear and without reproach", refused to be guilty of any duplicity or compromise with injustice. The fiat went forth removing from their offices all the men who had so grossly betrayed the public trust. This made the bloodsuckers of the poor his bitter enemies and they rebelled against him. But this did not deter Ali from his path of duty. Many a bold and seasoned reformer would have been afraid to tread on this path and would have deemed it expedient to seek out ways and means of convenient compromise. But Hazrat Ali did not believe in dishonest diplomacy. He thought more of the wretched plight of the humble subjects of the state suffering under the yoke of the corrupt governors and he considered it his first duty to eradicate abuse and corruption from public service.

Both by example and precept Hazrat Ali proved himself to be a God-fearing administrator. Although appointed to the highest office of the state, he regarded himself as a trustee of the nation. He lived in a humble thatched hut. He treated the treasures of the Commonwealth as the property of the nation and apportioned to himself from the public funds a share equal to that of the humblest citizen. He abhorred the whole paraphernalia of pomp and show. During his tenure of office, he introduced simplicity in every branch of life and also in every department of the Government. He insisted upon the Governors and officers of the state following his example. Ibn-ul-Atheer, a great Muslim historian, records that during his Caliphate, Ali was visited by Harun Ibn Hamza in the palace of Khurna. It was a midwinter evening and Harun found Ali shivering from lack of warm clothes. Harun could not bear the sight and exclaimed: "O Commander of the Faithful, a share has been allotted to you and your children in the public treasury, why are you undergoing such suffering?" "By Allah," replied Hazrat Ali, "I hate to make use of your public treasury. Behold, this is the same garment which I brought with me from Medina."

It was the day of Id-ul-Fitr and all Muslims clad in their best garments, assembled in the great mosque of Kufa. They were expecting the Caliph to appear with ceremonial pomp to lead the Id prayers. But they were disappointed to see Hazrat Ali appearing in his usual long shirt full of patches. This unceremonial dress displeased Ibn Abbas, who thought that Ali might have donned a more costly garment for the occasion. Ali, realising Ibn Abbas's perturbation, said, "what have you to do with my dress? This garment of mine is far from being a means of display of pride and it is such as can be worn by all Muslims."

It was the cardinal principle of Ali's administration that the ruler should adopt a standard of life equal to that of the humblest subject in the realm. He sincerely believed that the real greatness of a ruler did not consist in wearing rich and costly dresses but in relieving the distress of the suffering subjects. The public treasury was meant to meet not the extravagant demands of a ruler's vanity but the needs of the down-trodden people, to feed the starving

population and to clothe the naked. He always directed his governors to adopt a simple standard of life and nothing displeased him more than to learn that a governor had indulged in rich feasting. In a memorable letter of censure addressed to Osman Ibn Hanif, the Governor of Busra, Hazrat Ali wrote :-- "O Ibne Hanif, it has come to my knowledge that someone amongst the youths of Busra invited you to a wedding feast and that you attended it cheerfully and were entertained to a variety of rich dishes. I had never expected that you would consent to accept the invitation of people who keep the poor and the needy far away from their dining-tables and invite only the rich. Remember that it is essential for the faithful to have an Imam whose example is always to be followed and from whom all knowledge and guidance is to be derived. Bear in mind that in the worldly domain your Imam (i.e. Hazrat Ali) has cut down his necessities, so much so that in dress he does not require more than two old shirts and in food not more than two (loaves) of bread. It is understandable that you cannot bring yourself down to this level of abstinence, but still, as far as possible, you should assist me by observing piety, chastity and straightforwardness. I swear to Allah that I have not amassed gold and silver out of your worldly wealth nor have I provided myself with any new sheet in order to replace the present one when it becomes worn out. Had I desired to enjoy delicious honey, pure wheat and silk clothings, I could have easily done so, but what a pity it would be if I were to allow the animal in me to get the better of my inner soul, and my avarice to degrade me to the relishing of tasteful dishes. despite the knowledge that there are many in Hejaz and Yemen who have no means of getting a single piece of bread, or of being able to satisfy their hunger. Should I enjoy a restful sleep when all around me there are hung% and afflicted people? Is it fair and appropriate that should satisfy my vanity of being addressed as Commander of the Faithful and on my part I should not share their miseries and sorrows and be not willing to be one of them in their distresses and afflictions?"

This was Ali's real conception of the Caliphate, name!) that the Caliph or Ruler should share the miseries and sorrows, the distresses and afflictions of his subjects.

When Ali appointed his trusted disciple and friend Malik-al-Ashtar as the Governor of Egypt, he issued to him a letter of appointment which contained a full code of administrative instructions unequalled by any other royal charter even in this age of enlightenment and culture. He impressed upon Malik-al-Ashtar the importance of winning the confidence of the subjects by love and kindness and abjured him from exercising dictatorial powers and from vanity and pride. "Do not say I am your Overlord and Dictator and that you should therefore bow to my command, as that will corrupt your heart, weaken your faith in religion and create disorder in the state." In administering Justice, he impressed upon Malik-al-Ashtar the absolute necessity of being impartial and of deciding claims in open courts. He wrote, "Meet the oppressed and the lowly periodically in an open conference and, conscious of divine presence there have a heart to heart talk with them. For I have heard the Prophet of Allah saying that no nation or society will occupy a high position in which the strong do not discharge their duty to the weak and the rights of the weak cannot be taken from the strong."

The scanty records available of the notable trials adjudicated upon by Hazrat Ali both in the reign of the early Caliphs as well as during his own regime fully endorse the prognostication of the Holy Prophet that Ali was the best Judge amongst his disciples. If the law reports of the Arabian High Court were available, every lawyer today would have acknowledged Hazrat Ali as the greatest Lord Chief Justice of his age. "But for his assassination", to quote a French Historian, "the Muslim world might have witnessed the realisation of the Prophet's teachings, in the actual amalgamation of Reason with Law, and in the impersonation of the first principles of true philosophy in positive action."

The non-Muslim subjects, called Zimmis, had a special place of protection in Hazrat Ali's regime. In order to protect them from exploitation, he decreed that no Muslim was allowed to acquire the land of a Zimmi even by purchase. They were equal with Muslims in the eyes of the law and the blood of the Zimmi, said Hazrat Ali, was as sacred as that of a Muslim. "Had Ali been allowed to reign in peace," says Oelsner, "his virtues, his firmness and his ascendancy of character would have perpetuated the old republic and its simple manners. The dagger of an assassin destroyed the hope of Islam." "With him," says Major Osborn, "perished the truest-hearted and best Muslim of whom Mohammedan History has preserved remembrance."

It has been rightly said that a genius comes before his age. Hazrat Ali was born at a time when a reformer was greatly needed but there were few persons capable of understanding and appreciating the genius of this great administrator. Syed Ameer Ali correctly sums up the position when he says, "Seven centuries before this wonderful man would have been apotheosised; thirteen centuries later his genius and his talents, his virtues and valour, would have extorted the admiration of the civilised world."

His literary achievements

"Ali deserves a distinguished place in literary history," Devenport remarks, "in as much as he had cultivated his mind with an ease and assiduity unusual in his age and country. He left many collections of sentences, proverbs and poetical pieces. Gobblin and Lette published fragments of these sentences, the former at Leyden in 1629 and the latter in 1746. Vather published Gobblin's fragments in French in 1660. Ockley, in the third edition of his 'History of Saracens', has given an English translation of 169 of Ali's sentences. A treatise also by Ali upon the magical

science is said to be still preserved in the Imperial Library at Constantinople. Such a man was Ali. May he for ever repose on the bosom of the Eternal Beatitude."

Arabic literature reached its climax by means of his precious sayings and sermons a few of which have been collected by Syed Shareef al-Razi in the form of a book, known as "Nahjul Balagha."

Students of the Arabic language will observe with interest the assistance that Ali gave to Abut Aswad-adDuwali in the task of systematizing Arabic, grammar. Abul Aswad was one of the most eminent of the Tabis, an inhabitant of Busra, and a partisan of Ali under whom he fought in the battle of Siffin. In intelligence he was one of the most perfect of men, and in reason he was one of the most sagacious. He was the originator of Arabic grammar. It is said that Ali laid down for him the principle : the three parts of speech are, the Noun, the Verb, and the Particle, telling him to prepare a complete treatise based upon it.

Hassan al-Basari called him "the Scholar of God in this community."

There is a tradition to the effect that Ali had great skill in writing the Kufic characters. He was able to make the elongated Kat*, which is characteristic of that script, with such uniform exactness that it was scarcely possible, even with a compass, to distinguish any difference between the Kafs that he had written.

There are traditions that affirm that Ali had a copy of the Quran of his own, a special copy which he had annotated according to the conversations he had with the Holy Prophet. This additional writing on the margin of his own Quran is apparently in the nature of commentary from the Prophet that others did not know. It has a bearing on the existence of a mysterious book that is called the 'Jafr'. Al-Kulaini remarks that, "when the Apostle taught anything to Ali, Ali evolved from it a thousand other things. He declares that the Sahifa in Ali's handwriting was seventy cubits in length, as measured by the arm of the Apostle, and that it contained everything permitted and forbidden", and everything necessary for man kind. And in the Jafr, or secret book, he assures us that there was to be found, "the knowledge of prophets, and of the scholars of the Bani Israel". Masudi shows how the later Imams were accustomed to refer at times to these secret books that Ali left in their keeping. Belief in the existence of these sacred and secret books with the Imams was firm.

In one of the popular books that Muhammad Bakir Majlisi wrote in the seventeenth century, the "HayatulKulub", or Life of Hearts, it is related that at the time when Muhammad appealed to the Nassara (Christians) in Najraan in Yemen to accept him as a Prophet whose coming had been foretold by Jesus, a great book called the "Jama" was referred to in the course of the debate. It was a collection of writings of 1,24,000 Prophets. The first part was the book of Adam, "which related to the kingdom of the Most High, what He had created and He has decreed in heaven and earth respecting things temporal and eternal. This book, which contains all sciences, was transmitted by the father of mankind to Prophet Shays. Shays added his contributions to the great work and handed it to Prophet Idris, and likewise there were the writings of the Prophets Abraham and Moses and Jesus until at last the time came for the great and final work of Ahmad (or Muhammad).

A Persian manual on the lives of the Imams, which is a compilation from the voluminous works of Majlisi, was written in Persian and lithographed in Teheran in 1912. It is called "Tazkeratul-A'imma," and here it stated that the 'Jafr wa Jaameaa' is a book that the scholars agree that Ali had in his possession, and that the part that now exists consists of twenty-eight portions, and that each portion has twenty-eight pages, and each page twenty eight divisions "and no one besides God, the Prophet and the Imams know the character in which it is written, unless the sinless Imams would have taught it to one."

The same modern manual mentions also "the Book of Ali" (the Sahifa), "which the Prophet dictated and Ali wrote. It is seventy metres long and the width of a sheepskin. It is also called the 'lama', and it shows what things are permitted and what things are forbidden". Two other minor works of the same sort are the "Jafr Abyad" (the white Jafer), which has fourteen portions, and each portion has fourteen divisions, and the writing of Fatima, with many traditions, to show that God taught Adam twenty-five of the Divine names, Noah knew eight, Abraham had six, Moses had four, Jesus had two, and Assif ibn Barkhia had one, whereas the Apostle of God knew seventy-two of these names, which he taught to Ali.

Collections have been made of maxims and aphorisms that have originated from Ali. A hundred of these were collected by the Persian poet Rashid al-Din and they have been translated into German. There are one hundred and sixty nine of these moral sayings given in Ockley's History of the Saracens (p. 339).

It was said to Ali, "What is generosity?" He replied, "that from which the initiative proceedeth, for what cometh after a request is liberality and munificence."

On another occasion he remarked, "He who seeketh to do justice unto men, let him desire for them what he desireth for himself."

According to historian Masudi (Murooj-uz-Zahab Masudi Vol. II, page 33, Egypt), Hazrat Ali is credited with not less than 480 treatise, lectures and epistles on a variety of subjects dealing with philosophy, religion, law and politics, as collected by Zaid Ibn Wahab in the Imam's . So highly valued are these contributions own lifetime both for contents and their intrinsic literary worth that some of his master-pieces have formed throughout the course of Islamic history, subjects of study in centres of Muslim learning. Indeed, his reputation seems to have travelled to Europe at the time of the Renaissance. Edward Powcock, (1604-1691), a professor at the University of Oxford, published the first English translation of his 'Rhetoric'.

Khawja Hasan Nizam has quoted a list of the following Muslim Scholars who have collected the teachings of Hazrat Ali in their respective books.

1. Seerat-e-Ali by Hafiz Hamadan Ibrahim who died in 181 A.H.
2. Musnad-e-Ali by Ahmed bin Ibrahim who died in 226 A.H.
3. Musnad-e-Ali by Mohammad bin Abdullah who died in 258 A.H.
4. Akbar-wo-Seyar-e-Ali by yaqoob bin Shaiba who died 262 A.H. 5. Musnad-e-Ali by Qazi Ismail who died in 283 A.H.
6. Musnad-e-Ali by Abubakr Ahmad bin Ali who died in 292 A.H.
7. Musnad-c-Ali by Ahmad bin Shoaib Nisayee who died in 303 A.H.

The historian John J. Pool (author of the life of H. M. Queen Victoria) in his book 'Studies in Mohammedanism' says : "Ali was the first Caliph to protect and encourage national literature. The Prince was a scholar himself and many of his wise sayings and proverbs are published in a book. It is a remarkable work and deserves to be more widely read in the west."

In Summing up Hazrat Ali's worth, Maswoodi says, "If the glorious name of being the first Muslim, a comrade of the Holy Prophet in exile, his faithful companion in the struggle for the Faith, his intimate associate in life and his kinsman; if a true knowledge of the spirit of his teachings and of the Book; if self-abnegation and practice of justice; if honesty, purity and love of truth; if a knowledge of law and science, constitute a claim to pre-eminence. then all must regard Hazrat Ali as the foremost Muslim. We Shall search in vain to find, either among his predecessors (save one) or among his successors, those virtues with which God had endowed him."

His sermons

Hazrat Ali says that as a Caliph and Ruler, he promises safety and security of life, property, honour, social status and religious freedom to non-Muslims and they should not be maltreated and looked down upon. So long as they do not try to betray and injure the cause of the state of Islam they should not be molested and should be allowed to practice their religion and trades freely and openly. Islam teaches us to carry a message of peace with us and improve the status of society wherever we go and the best way to. achieve this is to create amity, friendliness and concord between human beings. Therefore, Muslims should try to develop friendship of these people and should never resort to wrong use of power, force or arrogance. Non-Muslims should not be over-taxed, humiliated, and should not be forced out of their homes, lands and trades. Their priests should be treated with due respect. Their monasteries should be protected, they should be allowed to carry on their lectures, teachings and preachings as usual, and their religious ceremonies should not be prohibited. If they want to build their places of worship then fallow ownerless lands should be allotted to them. One who disobeys the order is going against the orders of God and the Holy Prophet (A.S.) and will deserve His wrath.

It may be mentioned here that Ali was so popular even among the non-Muslims that when he died, all the Christians, Jews and Zorastrians of Kufa, particularly their women and children who were personally looked after by Ali, lamented his death and wept as one does for one's father. Mourning was observed even in Jerusalem and the Lord Bishop also could not restrain his tears. (Prof. M. G. Reynold's Book on Islam, Chapter III.)

"Be virtuous when there is still time for you to realise and adopt virtues, when repentance can do you good, when prayers are heard: when you are enjoying peace and comfort and when the angels are still writing your good and bad actions (when you still have power and opportunities to do good or to be wicked). Do good before old age or disability stops you from doing anything, before protracted illness renders you exhausted and unfit for any work and before death takes you away from this sphere of activities (life). Because death, sooner or later, will put an end to all your pleasures and all your enjoyments, it will send you far away from your cherished surroundings."

"Have you fully realised what Islam is? It is a religion founded on truth. It is such a fountainhead of learning that from it flow out several streams of wisdom and knowledge. It is such a lamp that from it several lamps will be

lighted. It is a tall beacon lighting the path to God. It is a set of principles and beliefs which will satisfy every seeker of truth and reality."

"Know you all that God has made Islam the most sublime path towards His Supreme Pleasure and the highest standard of His Worship and Obedience. He has favoured it with noble precepts, exalted principles, indisputable arguments, unchallengeable supremacy and undeniable wisdom."

"It is upto you to maintain the eminence and dignity granted to it by the Lord, to follow it sincerely, to do justice to its articles of faith and belief, to implicitly obey its tenets and orders, and to give it the proper place in your lives."

"Weigh your own soul before the time for the weighing of your actions arrives; take count with yourself before you are called upon to account for your conduct in this existence; apply yourself to good and pure actions. adhere to the path of truth and rectitude before the soul is pressed to leave its earthly abode: verily. if you will not guide and warn yourself, none other can direct you. i adjure you to worship the Lord in purity and holiness. He has pointed out to you the path of salvation and the temptations of this world. Abstain from foulness, though it may be fair-seeming to your sight; avoid evil, however pleasant. For ye knoweth how far it takes you away from Him. Listen, and take warning by the words of the Merciful Guardian. O ye servants of my Lord, fulfil the duties that are imposed on you, for in their neglect is abasement : your good works alone will render easy the road to death. Remember, each sin increases the debt, and makes the chain (which binds you) heavier. The message of mercy has come; the path of truth is clear; obey the command that has been laid on you; live in purity, and work in piety, and ask God to help you in your endeavours, and to forgive your past transgressions. Cultivate humility and forbearance : comfort yourself with piety and truth. Take count of your actions with your own conscience, for. Those who takes such count reaps a great reward, and he who neglects incurs great loss. He who acts with piety gives rest to his soul; he who takes warning understands the truth; he who understands it attains perfect knowledge."

The following sermon, delivered by him on Friday, the 2nd of Moharram 36 A.H., before the rally of his governors, bears witness to his administrative ability:

"O, the Faithful Believers! As you have been entrusted with the grave responsibility of ruling the masses, you should bear God in mind, protect the unity of God through your actions and keep aloof from polytheism. Obey the commandments of the Almighty and the orders of the Holy Prophet. Follow the path of truth and set an example to others by your noble sayings and actions. Do not be proud of your high position and transcend rule. Consider this opportunity of yours as a God-sent bounty to serve mankind. Help the distressed and extend a helping hand to the weak and the tyrannised. Be vigilant of what happens in the expanse of your territories, take heed of the dishonest and beware of the troublemongers. Be courteous to the ambassadors of the foreign states and kind to the guests. Maintain good relations with the tribes living on the borders. Pay heed to the happiness of your subordinates and protect your province from revolt and civil disorders."

"The governors should work for the satisfaction of the people and try to develop the growth of agricultural products. They should refrain from collecting more taxes than are due. They should tour their provinces and supervise the work of their assistants. They should provide schools, orphanages, sanctuaries for the poor, rest-houses for travellers and police quarters for civil protection. They should accomplish the requirements of the soldiers and carefully look after the war steeds."

On another occasion, when the tribe of Bani Tameem complained to the Caliph against Abdullah bin Abbas, one of his governors, he wrote to Abdullah thus :

"You should not behave like a beast towards your subjects. They are respectable people who should be treated with courtesy. You are representing me and the treatment meted out by you to the subjects is considered as that of mine. Your first consideration should be the welfare of those over whom you rule and you must treat them with due respect."

In the following sermon, the Holy Imam has described his sincere work, his courage and his fortitude in the cause of Islam, comparing other Muslims, especially during those early days, when the Holy Prophet started to preach Islam.

"I stood up alone among my contemporaries to welcome the order of God while they (Muslims) were keeping back timidly. I boldly came forward to defend the Faith while they were nervously hiding their heads under their hoods. I unhesitatingly testified to the message of God, while they were tongue-tied with fear of the non-believers. I walked the path of truth under the Divine Light while they stood still under clouds of uncertainty and doubt about religion and God. I never spoke aloud of my virtues, though I surpassed every one of them in attaining Divine Favour."

"Possessing these attributes and distinction I rose higher than any of them and stood alone at that eminence. My stand was firm like that of a mountain which neither a cyclone can shake nor tornadoes break. Not a single person has any justifiable cause to blame me or to find fault with me."

"Al! those, whom society has wronged or has unjustly humiliated, are respectable before me and dear to me and I shall secure for them their just claims and rights, while despotic and arrogant usurpers of human rights are contemptible in my eyes and I shall make them give back the rights and privileges thus wrongly usurped. I cheerfully resigned to the will of God and have willingly bowed my head at His Command."

"Can you believe that I could frame a lie unto our Holy Prophet! I was the first person to attest him as the Prophet of God, how can I be first to calumniate him! Therefore, when I deliberated upon the state of affairs, I came to the conclusion that I must give priority to the fulfilment of a promise made to the Holy Prophet over the problem of asking people to take the Oath of allegiance to me."

The doctrine of Renunciation played no part in Ali's counsels. He advised men not to love this world but he did not advise them to renounce it. On the contrary he urged them to live their life on earth in an orderly way so that they might better the lot of everyone in this world as a preparation for a happy life in the next world. In one of his sermons he exhorted :

"O men of God! May God keep you happy and shower His favours upon you ! You should prepare yourselves for the long journey that awaits you. There are many difficulties that beset your path. Death is ever anxious to devour you. Renounce the riches of the world and catch hold of piety. Life in this world is short whereas life after death will be everlasting. Buy those commodities here (in this world) which will stand you in good stead in the other. Do not demean yourself before God, who is well acquainted with your innermost feelings. Do not allow your soul to be lost in this world before death may overtake you. O men! Cast a glance on this world from a wise man's point of view. She (the world) casts out her guests in a short space of time. She harasses those with whom she fondles and prattles. Whatever part of life is wasted in idle pursuits can never be retrieved. Its (world's) gratifications and enjoyments are soon changed into sufferings and pain, its embellishments and decorations into distortions and impoverishment. The days of this life are numbered. Death is inevitable and is bound to come soon. After having adorned your person with good deeds you should not pay any heed whether death catches you or you catch death. Many men buy clothes, which instead of being worn by them are used in their coffins. Many men build houses which instead of becoming abodes become their graves. No one has lived forever in this world and no one has invented such a medicine which may make men immune from the clutches of death. Solomon the Prophet reigned with great pomp and majesty but when his time came he had to depart from this world. The world was left without him and his palaces are nothing but a heap of ruins. (Take the case) of those men who lived in impregnable citadels on the top of mountains guarded by a powerful army, but when their time came, death ejected them from those fortified places and put them to eternal sleep in graves. One can hear the whisper of the angels over their graves "Where. are those stiffnecked people who boasted of their pelf and power and their crowns and thrones? Where are their royal robes? What became of those beauties whose radiance under veils dimmed the light of (the sun) in this world? Where have gone those forts which were decorated with golden curtains, in front of which stood sentries (for watch and ward)? Do not they show us how powerless they were? Have not the worms eaten their bodies, who only a few days ago set a magnificent and sumptuous table with luxurious plates? The vicissitudes of fortune have ruined their citadels, destroyed their royal robes and reduced to dust their crown and thrones?"

His supplications

"Thanks be to my Lord ; He the Adorable, the only one to be adored. My Lord, the Eternal, the Ever-existing, the Cherisher, the True Sovereign whose mercy and might overshadow the universe; the Regulator of the worm, and Light of the creation. Him do we worship; to Him belong all worship; He existed before all things, and will exist after all that is living has ceased. Thou art the adored, my Lord; Thou art the Master, the Loving and Forgiving; Thou bestowest power and might on whom Thou pleasest; him whom Thou hast exalted none can lower; and him whom Thou hast lowered none can exalt. Thou, my Lord, art the Eternal, the Creator, All-wise Mighty Sovereign; Thy knowledge encompasses everything; Thy beneficence is all-pervading; Thy forgiveness and mercy are all-embracing. O my Lord, Thou art the Helper of the afflicted, the Reliever of all distress, the Consoler of the broken-hearted ; Thou art present everywhere to help Thy servants. Thou knowest all secrets, all thoughts, Thou art present in every assembly, Fulfiller of all our needs, Bestower of all our blessings. Thou art the Friend of the poor and bereaved ; my Lord, Thou art my Fortress; a Haven for all who seek Thy help. Thou art the Refuge of the weak; the Helper of the pure and true. O my Lord, Thou art my Supporter, my Helper, the Helper of all who seek Thy help. O my Lord, Thou art the Creator, I am only created; Thou art my Sovereign, I am only Thy servant; Thou art the Helper, I am the beseecher; Thou, my Lord art my Refuge; Thou art the Forgiver, I am the sinner; Thou, my Lord, art the Merciful, All-knowing, All-loving; I am groping in the dark; I seek Thy knowledge and love. Bestow, my Lord, all Thy knowledge and love and mercy; forgive my sins, O my Lord, and let my approach be only to Thee."

His sayings

There is no treasure like knowledge.

The realm of knowledge has no bounds.

The chief of talents is knowledge.

Knowledge leads to wisdom, accordingly the educated man is the wise one; riches diminish by expenditure, while knowledge is increased by dissemination.

A wise man needs each day an hour set apart in which to examine his conscience, and measure what he has gained or lost.

The heart is the source of wisdom, with the ear as its channel.

Philosophy is a tree growing in the heart, and bearing its fruit on the tongue.

Belief and wisdom are twin brothers; Allah accepts not the one without the other.

While you live you die. Each breath of a man is a step nearer death.

Death awaits every living creature and everything must end.

You are the game that death hunts.

If you stand still, it will seize you;

If you flee, it will overtake you.

Books are the gardens of the learned.

The man of learning lives even after his death.

The ignorant man is dead, while still alive.

The scholar knows an ignorant man, because formerly he was ignorant himself, but the ignorant knows not the scholar, never having been one.

He is very unfortunate who cannot in his life-time gain a few sincere friends and sympathisers and more unfortunate is the one who has gained them and then to have lost them (through his deeds).

There is no greater wealth than wisdom,

No greater poverty than ignorance,

No greater heritage than culture,

And no greater friend and helpmate than consultation.

The strongest man is he who can fight against himself.

The strongest man is he who can make his reason conquer his passions.

Protect your wealth by means of Zakat.

Cure your sick through offering of Alms and destroy difficulties and dangers through prayers.

One without pity for others will never be pitied.

Whoever has compassion upon orphans, will see his own children treated kindly.

There is no better means of prolongation of life than Sadaqah (alms) and there is no better thing than prayers for emancipation from evils.

There is no better method of making human beings look venerable than by good manners and there is no better remedy than repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Beware that Sadqah (Alms) is a curtain between oneself and the fire of hell and is an easy medium for the Pool-e-Serat and is a protection from punishment.

Treat people in such a way and live amongst them in such a manner that if you die they weep over you and if you are alive they crave for your company.

I recommend five things to you, the attainment of which will be worth any amount of hardship : Not to expect anything from anyone but from God; not to fear anything but your sins; not to be ashamed to say, 'I do not know', when asked about something you are not aware of; not to be ashamed of learning a thing you do not know. Ever preserve the virtue of patience, for patience in relation to Eeman' (Faith) is like the head in relation to the body. And there is no good in a body which has no head, neither in Eeman' which has no patience.

He who understands Divine Greatness never boasts.

A sincere friend is sincere even in hardships.

Do not envy the glory and magnificence of others, let not pride and grandeur of this world puff you, nor let sorrow over its wickedness and poverty depress you; for, all glory and magnificence shall fade, all worldly bliss pass away and all evil and poverty surely end, as we shall ourselves pass away.

Humbleness and prostration bring nearness to God.

God the Almighty selected us from His Creation and selected for us our followers who assist us. They are pleased when we are pleased and are sorrowful in our sorrows. They give up their lives and property for our cause. Therefore they are ours and will be with us in Paradise.

If you believe in God, abstain from forbidden things, then you will be saved from all evils. If you please God, God will also please you.

Simplest way of attaining God's mercy is to be good to all humanity.

The descendants of the Prophet are his Confidants, the Shelter of his commands, the Trustees of his knowledge, the Stronghold of the Quran and the Mountains of his Faith.

It was his firm belief that a ruler should rule not to please himself but to bring happiness to the ruled. And it was on the basis of this principle that he laid down rules for his people to carry out :

(1) You must develop in yourself, kindness and love for your subjects. Do not behave with them as if you were a ferocious beast.

(2) Muslims and non-Muslims should be treated alike. Muslims are your brothers and non-Muslims are human beings just like you.

(3) Do not feel ashamed to forgive. Do not be hasty with punishment. Do not quickly lose your temper over mistakes and failures of those over whom you rule. Anger and desire for vengeance are not going to be of much use to you in administration.

(4) Do not allow favouritism and nepotism to force you to violate your duties to God and man, and drive you towards tyranny and oppression.

(5) While selecting officers take care that you do not select such persons as have served tyrannical and oppressive rulers and have been responsible for atrocities and savage cruelties.

(6) Select honest and kind persons as your advisers and from amongst them prefer those who speak out the bitter truth to you unreservedly without fear or favour.

(7) Appointments in the first place must be on probation.

- (8) *Keep your officers well paid so that they may not be tempted to practice corruption or misappropriation.*
- (9) *Appoint confidential officers secretly to watch the activities of your officers and staff and report to you about their behaviour.*
- (10) *Your secretaries should be the cream of your civil, judicial or military service. Choose the best among them irrespective of age or period of service.*
- (11) *All letters or applications should be dealt with by the officers and replies or orders about them should be drafted by them only. No subordinate must be allowed to be the eyes and the mind of these officers.*
- (12) *Take your subjects into your confidence and make them feel that you are their well-wisher and friend.*
- (13) *Never break a promise or go against the terms of a treaty. It is a sin against God.*
- (14) *You must take care of your traders but should never allow them to resort to hoarding, black-marketing and profiteering.*
- (15) *Help handicraft; it reduces poverty and raises the standard of life.*
- (16) *Agriculturists are assets to the state and should be protected.*
- (17) *Remember that your sacred duty is to look after the poor, disabled and the orphans. Let not your officers humiliate them, ill-treat them or oppress them. Help them, protect them and let them approach you whenever they are in need of your help.*
- (18) *Avoid bloodshed, do not kill anybody unless he deserves to be killed according to the Canons of Islam.*

Hazrat Ali's administration was too disturbed by civil war to allow him to remedy the evils of the previous administration ; but he removed most of the corrupt governors and established a state archive for the safe custody and preservation of records of the Caliphate. He created the office of 'Hajib' (chamberlain) and that of the 'Sahibush-Shurta' (Captain of the Guard). He reorganised the police and regulated their duties. Under his advice the era of 'Hijra' was established and schools and mosques were also founded and endowed in every part of the empire.

Recognition of Ali's superiority

Ibn-e-Hajar Makki in Sawaiq-e-Muhariqa reports that Abubakr once said :

"It would be difficult indeed for any one to pass over the bridge of 'Sire, on the Day of Judgment without getting a permit from Ali, because this is what I have heard from the Holy Prophet."

Omar related that once the Holy Prophet said, "If the faith of the inhabitants of the seven worlds be put on one side of the scale, and that of Ali alone on the other side, verily Ali's side will weigh heavier."

Imam Shafai's famous verse : "Ali will judge mankind and allot them either paradise or hell. He was the leader of men and Jinns, the true Testator of the Holy Prophet. If the followers of Ali are 'Raffizhes' (the heterogeneous sect of Shias) verily I am one of that sect. Ali at the time of the breaking of the symbols in the Kaaba put his feet on that shoulder where God had put His hand on the 'Night of Meraj' and verily Ali was that man into whose eyes shone the light of God."

Once, Imam Ahmad asked his father, Imam Hanbal, who was superior, Moawiya or Ali, to which query Imam Hanbal replied, "Ali had numerous enemies and all of them tried to find fault with him but they searched in vain and could not find any flaw in him. At long last they joined hands with Moawiya and declared war on Ali. When they failed to defeat him by fair means they took to treacherous and deceitful courses to harm him."

Ibn Athir says, "Ali was the first Caliph whose parents were pure Hashimites and who was so judicial minded that he could not put up with the dishonesty even if his friends or relatives were to indulge in it and was so much engrossed in piety that at the time of his marriage with Fatima, he did not possess anything save a camel skin, which he converted into a bed sheet at night. The Prophet in his sayings has not extolled any of his companions as much as he has Ali. Surely Ali never spoke a lie in his life-time."

Some one asked the Umayyad Caliph, Omar bin Abdul Aziz (717-20 A.D.) whom he considered the most pious man in the world, to which query he replied, "Ali excelled mankind in piety. Not only this, but he tried zealously to reform his friends, associates, acquaintances and all those who came in contact with him."

Ibn Masud used to say that throughout Arabia there was no more impartial judge than Ali.

Abu Saeed Khudiri held that he could easily detect a hypocrite by his enmity towards Ali.

Abdullah ibn Abbas used to say, "Should schism seep into Islam, it would be the bounden duty of the believers to attach themselves fast to Ali (i.e. his teachings) and the Quran for I have heard the Prophet say, 'Ali was the first to believe in me, he will be the first to meet me in Paradise and will be the greatest discriminator of truth from falsehood, he is the leader of all the believers, he is the 'Sadiq-i-Akbar' (the great truthful one) and is that door (of faith) the entry through which will lead to Paradise."

(Munaqib ibn Murwaiyia)

Ali's advent foretold in the Scriptures

After the creation of the world, God sent his prophets to illumine mankind, the most auspicious of these being Abraham. In response to a prayer to God, asking for a blessing, Abraham is said to have received the answer : "Sarah, thy wife, shall bear thee a son and thou shall call him Isaac : and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him. And as for Ishmael I have heard thee : behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly, twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation." (Genesis 18 : 19-20).

The twelve princes referred to in this prophecy are obviously the twelve Imams of whom the first is Ali, who drew his lineage from Ishmael, as foretold by God. The rest of the Imams are in direct lineage from Ali and Fatima, the daughter of the Holy Prophet.

The various appellations

Thus, specially created by God and displaying divine traits of character, Ali has been bestowed with many names.

The following appellations are those most generally added to Ali's name "Moula" (Master), "Murtaza" (he with whom God is well pleased), "Haider" (the lion), "Wali Allah" (Friend of God), "Haidar-i-Karrar" (the impetuous lion), "Asad Allah al-Ghaib" (the victorious lion of God), "Moula Mushkkil-Kusha" (the Master who solves the difficulties of others), "Shah-i-Wilayat" (the King of the pious), "Abul Sibtayan" (the father of Hasan and Husain, who are the leaders of the youths of paradise), "Amin-ul-Momineen" (Trustee of the faithful), "Imam-ul-Mutakeen" (Leader of the Holy), "Sayyid-ul-Momineen" (Master of the believers-in-faith), "Khatum-ul-Wassee-een" (the Seal of Prophet), "Amir-ul-Momineen" (the Commander of the faithful), "Al-Wasi" (the Successor), "Al-Hadi" (the Guide), "Khair-ul-Bariyya." (the best of the Creation).

He was born of the Divine Light that shone in God's sanctuary of the Kaaba and was brought up in infancy by the Holy Prophet himself, brought up by him as a son and was given his daughter in marriage. The Holy Prophet imparted divine knowledge to him. And, on attaining manhood, Ali stood by God's Apostle, risking all dangers for him, fighting all his battles and displaying such unflinching fidelity that his name became synonymous with loyalty and faithfulness.

Ali's piety

When Ali offered his prayers he was frequently observed to be in a strange physical condition. When asked to account for the pallor of his face and the way in which his body trembled he replied, "I present myself to the Almighty to render an account of the various obligations that devolve on me and I do not know whether I have discharged them dutifully by protecting the defenceless and aiding the oppressed." His humility before God was one of the reasons why he was regarded as a saint of saints. Another factor which made him exceptionally pious was the important part which he assigned to prayer in his daily life.

One day when the Holy Prophet was sleeping with his head in Ali's lap, the time of "Asr" (afternoon prayers) had passed. Informed by Divine revelation that he had caused Ali to miss his prayers, the Holy Prophet said, "Verily, Ali was busy in the set vice of God and His Apostle. O Lord! Command Thy sun not to set yet and to come back into the world again so as to enable Ali to perform his prayers." The Sun re-appeared forthwith until Ali had finished his prayers.

In one of his many battles Ali is said to have been pierced by the head of an arrow, which could not be extracted and which caused him great pain for many months. One day, he was holding communion with God, he went into a

state of reverie and on emerging from this trance he found that the head of the arrow had come out of its own accord, through the intercession of Divine Favours.

Because Ali was considered to be the most pious and most holy of all the believers in faith, the people also began to feel that God must have rewarded him by granting him the power to perform miracles. Tales abound of miraculous happenings. A withered tree grew again at Ali's touch; pebbles turned into pieces of gold at his command, so that a believer in faith could find money to pay back a Jewish usurer; Ali was gifted with divine qualities.

The gateway to knowledge

Ali was regarded as a living encyclopaedia, as knowledge personified, drawing his learning ostensibly from the Holy Prophet, but in reality direct from God. Thus Ali's knowledge was of Divine Origin. To learn was so natural for him that its love had almost become instinctive in his character. Ali was imbued with virtues right from his birth. As he was sent by God specifically to enlighten the world, his commentaries, his theological speculations, ceremonial prayers, his pronouncements on social laws and ethics could not fail to enlighten mankind. The Holy Prophet used to say, "If I am the city of knowledge, verily Ali is the gate by which people can enter that city." On another occasion the Prophet said, "Of my followers, Ali surpasses all in the possession of knowledge. Wisdom and knowledge have been divided into ten parts, one part being given to the entire world while Ali alone possesses the other nine." On another occasion, the Prophet remarked, "The relationship of my other companions to Ali in matters of knowledge is that of a single drop to a mighty ocean."

Ali used to say that the Holy Prophet never failed to answer his questions and that, if he remained silent, the Apostle of God, used to insist on his entering into a dialogue. At one of the gatherings of the Medinite Ansars and the Meccan Muhajirs Ali said, "My inner self is so full of knowledge that it is bursting forth to illumine others. Alas, there are few who could derive benefit from it. O ye men! Ask me any problems now, before death overtakes me. This is the knowledge which the Holy Prophet has imparted to me by his tongue from my infancy. Mine is the knowledge which relates to the beginning and the end." Similarly, on another occasion, Ali claimed that he was familiar with the ways of heaven (celestial knowledge) rather than of this earth (secular knowledge); although few people of his time have known so much about the secular sciences.

Ali as founder of the science of commentary

The credit of founding the "Ilm-ul-Tafseer" or "The science of Commentary" on the Quran, also goes to Ali. The analysts unanimously declare that when any chapter or verse was revealed to the Holy Prophet he used to acquaint Ali with it. Thus as Ali was intimately connected with the source of the Quran at first hand, Ali's expositions and interpretations were authoritative and binding. It was in imitation of Ali that later commentators promoted the exposition of the Quran into a regular science. The elaboration of the various doctrines and dogmas which have since enlightened the Muslims, was thus chiefly due to the initiative taken by Ali.

Ali an authority on the Scriptures

There is ample evidence to show that Ali was well acquainted with both the Old and New Testaments, which he applied frequently when deciding judicial cases involving Jews and Christians respectively. He was similarly well-versed in the Quran, (the fountain-head of the teachings of Islam) and the prerogative of interpreting the Quran could only be entrusted to a learned scholar of Divine choosing and Ali's commentaries on the Holy Book are the only authoritative ones.

Despite his extreme intellectualism, he employed the language of the common man, using everyday phraseology and imagery such as could be understood by the layman. His commentaries gave a new conception and strength to Islamic creed, for which they formed a doctrinal basis; it was his expositions which transformed Islam into a practical code for everyday living. Islam ceased to be a mere collection of beliefs and formulae and came to stand for the principles of life. As an intimate of the Prophet he knew at what time and under what circumstances each Verse of the Holy Quran had been revealed and to the work of the Holy Prophet he was able to add eloquent and illuminating adornments and explanations. His legal knowledge was also most useful in the exposition of the Quranic laws.

It was his knowledge of these laws which made him refuse to agree to the Kharijite slogan, "the kingdom and decision belong to God alone." Ali would not negotiate with the rebels, recognising a seditious purpose behind their

quasi-religious sentiments. Instead, he assembled leading scholars of the Quran and said to them, "Has not the Quran ordained that a judge be appointed to act as arbiter in the case of differences between husband and wife and the like, then how can it be that at the occurrence of a rift between the ranks of Islam and its followers, God can withhold the appointment of arbiters? Is the position of a nation of less importance than of an individual couple? How can a matter of such magnitude be left unattended by God?"

"The Almighty God has collected the whole Quran in the heart of Ali." The duty of the collection and codification of the Quran was entrusted to Ali.

Ali dedicates his life to the propagation of truth

A careful study of the biographies of great men reveals that they lived for a central idea and that their life's work consisted of delivering that message to humanity. History tells us that when such men met with obstacles in their path, they intensified their efforts. The greater the opposition they had to overcome, the more determinedly they held aloft the torch of truth which burned with ever increasing brightness against the darkness that enveloped all other objects. Much single-minded zeal characterised the life of Ali, who bore his torch safely through a multitudinous throng of woes and enemies. It cannot be said that Ali thrived on difficulties and opposition for there is abundant evidence that they caused him much distress of heart and mind, but they never, at any time, caused him to deviate from the right or to give up hope. Where any other man would have become a wily intriguer or a fierce and bloody tyrant, Ali retained undiminished sincerity and true gentleness of spirit. Where other believers might have lost faith, so many were the trials that beset him, Ali held fast to his belief in Islam and preserved a stoic resignation to God. The example of his saintly life, remarkable as it was for its sobriety, piety and continence, has since furnished an ethical code of behaviour for millions of believers. Nor did he effect a reformation in Islamic thought by example alone. He consciously re-organised the religious doctrines and systematised them; clarifying by his commentaries the problems of Islamic jurisprudence, the Hadithes, and the Quran. Himself combating with evil forces, Ali dedicated his life to the propagation of Islam. Through his exalted personality, the ideals, for which he stood and which he embodied in his own saintly life, have continued to flow through Islam in a mighty stream.

His Character

The late George Gordon was a famous Christian historian, linguist, philosopher and poet of Egypt. Arabic was his mother tongue, at the same time he was well versed in English, French, German, Persian and Latin, and he used to contribute to historical and philosophical magazines of France, Germany and England.

About Hazrat Ali he said:

"None can praise Ali to the extent that he deserves. So many instances of his piety and fear of God are cited that one starts loving and venerating him. He was a true, strict and scrupulous follower of Islam. His words and deeds bore stamps of nobility, sagacity and courage of conviction. He was a great man having his own independent views about life and its problems. He never deceived, misled, or betrayed anybody. In various phases and periods of his life he exhibited marvelous strength of body and mind which were due to his true faith in religion and in his sincere belief in truth and justice. He never had a servant and never allowed his slaves to work hard. Often he would carry his household goods himself and if anybody offered to relieve him of the weight he would refuse."

Ali's views on charity

Ali was always extremely poor, yet he was as renowned for his charity as he was for his piety. Because he never owned any money or goods of his own, he had to be exempted from the Zakat, the obligatory alms tax levied on every male and female Muslim of means, but whenever his share of the "Ghanima" (booty) or "Fay" came into his hands, he immediately distributed it amongst the poor and destitute, giving not a proportion of it but all till nothing remained for himself or his family. His deeds of charity were on the lips of every one.

'A beggar once received a ring while Ali lay prostrate on his prayer-mat.' There are confirmed traditions that the angel Gabriel appeared to the Holy Prophet at that time and revealed the following verse of the Quran:

"Your friend is only Allah and His Messenger and the Believers who observe prayers and charity, even in prostration when worshipping God alone." (5 : 55)

Another story relates how somebody presented 300 gold coins to the Holy Prophet who made a present of them to Ali. Ali immediately decided to give them away in three instalments of 100 pieces. On his way home, after finishing his night prayers, he saw a harlot, to whom he gave the first one hundred coins. Early next morning the whole town was gossiping about Ali's misplaced charity and how he had squandered money on a woman of ill repute. Returning home the next night, after prayers he met a man, who was to all intents and purposes a thief, yet he gave him the money. Again the people started to gossip, saying that this time Ali had given the money to a worthless and good-for-nothing person. On the third night he met a rich man to whom he gave the remainder of the money. At this the people again murmured against Ali saying that he had wasted the money on a worthless miser. Now no money was left and Ali repaired to the Holy Prophet, to whom he related what had transpired. The Holy Prophet told Ali that the angel Gabriel had visited him and informed him that God had accepted Ali's charity on all the three occasions. The harlot after getting the money had given up prostitution and had resolved to lead a chaste life; the thief after getting the money had resolved to give up larceny and had entered into honest business, and the rich man had been so ashamed at receiving alms from someone as poor as Ali that he had decided to cease hoarding wealth and give all he possessed to the poor.

That Ali's charity had proved acceptable to the Almighty God was also revealed in the following Quranic Verse : "Men, whom neither merchandise nor business diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the observance of the prayers and the giving of alms. They fear a day in which hearts and eyes will be agitated." (24 : 37) On another occasion as related by Tabrani, Wahidi in Tafseer-e-Kashaf page 286 and Suyuti in Dur-e-Mansoor Vol. I page 363, Ali had Dirhams (about rupees two and fifty paise), with a view to spending it in a manner most agreeable to God, he gave one Dirham in charity at night in a hidden manner and one Dirham in the night openly and one Dirham in the daytime hiddenly and one Dirham openly. According to the same authority, God praised Ali in verse 274 of Sura Baciair approving all the four manners of his charity.

Not only did Ali practise charity himself but he preached it to others. A great many of his sermons stress the importance of alms giving. In one of these he said, "Of the various meritorious acts of a Believer, one of the most acceptable is "Zakat". It behoves every one to give charity because from amongst the acts of worship this is the one most pleasing to God." In another sermon he emphasised that God had sent men in this world only to test them. When a man dies his relatives ask how much wealth -he has left, while the angels look to see how much he had given in charity, in the path of God. "O thou people! Send a part of your wealth in the way of God so that it may stand you in good stead in the next world. Do not leave your entire wealth here so as to be a source of annoyance to you (in the world to come)."

Whenever Ali learned that someone was hungry or thirsty, without clothes or in debt, he would provide food, water, clothes and money for him. He would go to the houses of the sick, nurse them and give them money and medicines. Although Ali's shirts, wearing apparel and shoes were full of patches, yet he felt the greatest pleasure in providing others with clothes. Whenever Ali used to visit the bazars of Kufa, he would help the travellers, the aged and the infirm. He was particularly kind to the elderly who could not support themselves and the widows who were left destitute.

Once Ali saw a woman who was carrying on her shoulders a waterskin which was too heavy a load for her feeble body. Ali took the load on to his own shoulder and accompanied her to her house. She had a number of children who awaited her arrival anxiously. In the course of talks, Ali came to know that her husband was a Kharijite who had fallen in a battle fighting against him (Ali). The widow tended the destitute children and earned her living by doing odd jobs and working for others. The next day Ali again repaired to the hut of the widow with a basketful of eatables. On his way towards her house, Ali met a number of people who wanted to carry the basket for him but the Caliph refused to take any one's help saying, "You will share my burden today but who will be there to share it on the Day of Judgment." Thus carrying the basket on his shoulders the Caliph reached the widow's house, knocked at her door and put the provisions before her. The poor woman was overjoyed and in great excitement said, "May God bless you. Let the Almighty decide between me and Ali". At this Ali said,

"Either let me bake you some bread with this flour that I have brought you or you bake it and I will play with your children and try to cheer them up." The woman replied, "I will do the baking if you will light the oven for me." Ali, who had been distributing dates to the children immediately apologised for his discourtesy in not having offered to light the fire. When it flamed up and he felt the heat of the oven scorching his face, he said, "Taste the heat of this fire; imagine what punishment awaits one who has neglected the widows and orphans." In the meantime the next door neighbour had come in and had recognised Ali as the Caliph. "Cursed be thou", she said, reprimanding the widow, "How dare you talk so insolently to the Commander of the Faithful?" The widow in great shame fell prostrate to the ground, begging forgiveness, but Ali said, "It is Ali who must feel ashamed at having neglected you."

Ali's humility

Ali was humble and hated pomp and arrogance. Even as Caliph he used to sweep the floor of his own house, chop wood for fuel, carry water on his shoulders, mend his own shoes, wash his own clothes and milk his goat, Ali's wife Fatima did similar domestic jobs with her own hands, grinding wheat in the hand-mill, baking bread, lighting the oven, washing the dishes and tending to her children.

Returning one day with some dates from the bazar he received many offers from people anxious to carry them for him. Ali refused them all, saying, "Whosoever is responsible for looking after his children, has the bigger responsibility of carrying the burden himself." Ali was often seen walking barefooted and on one occasion when he happened to be riding a horse he was distressed to find people following him on foot. Asking them what they wanted, he was told that they felt elated by walking in his retinue. To this Ali replied, "Go back to your business. By walking behind a rider, you will breed feelings of inferiority in yourselves and infect me with arrogance."

On another occasion when Ali was discussing the essential qualities of a ruler in a sermon, a member of the congregation rose and praised Ali for his eloquence. Ali said that his subjects ought not to praise him, for he wanted no flattery, being all too conscious of his own unworthiness. Concluding his sermon he said, "To a person who has been influenced by the superb Majesty of God, everything else appears petty and frivolous. He looks upon all other things as shallow and trivial. The worst ruler is one who is given to pride and arrogance and hears flattering words from others. All praise is due to God. You should not praise me because I herewith declare before God and all of you that are here that I have many responsibilities which still lie undischarged. In the face of this how can any one applaud me and consider me praiseworthy? You should not accord me that treatment which is only befitting to tyrants. Neither become afraid of me nor ever hesitate to tell the truth. Do not show any consideration to me if you feel that I am wanting in justice, and never conceal the truth from me. I cannot trust any flatterer because he might mislead me and his tempting talk might beguile me into vainglory. I pray to God to save me from an erroneous path. We men are all alike and there is no other Master than God."

Reforms and social justice

Ali's ideas of social justice were all based on the laws which had been revealed in the Holy Quran. He discarded many of the pagan practices which belonged to the 'Age of Ignorance', and had begun to creep back into Arab life after the death of the Holy Prophet.

The core of Ali's ethical pronouncements was his interpretation of "Ummah", the Islamic community, which he conceived of as an organic entity capable of possessing moral and spiritual qualities. An individual could not lead his life in isolation but ought to live as part of the "Ummah", safeguarding the "Hooqooqul-Aybaad" (duties of individuals towards their fellow men), as ordained in the Quran. This could only be achieved by developing a sense of group-solidarity and loyalty and by each person striving to live in harmony with his fellows without encroaching upon or usurping the rights of others.

"Mankind" said Ali, "with all its spiritual faults and vices would move to a crisis of the nations and could only survive by a corporate sense of responsibility. Individual responsibility would positively avouch solidarity."

On the other hand, Ali realised that personal traits of character in individuals could exercise an influence over the life of the community. For this reason Ali urged upon the strong not to transgress the rights of the weak and he passed many decrees to safeguard the interests of the weaker members. He further held that a good government should not only be regulative but also reformative in its application. He defined the State as "a community in action" and considered the government as instrumental in achieving that end. A righteous government meant a righteous Caliph, for the Caliph was the head of the community, charged to fulfil the responsibilities imposed on him by its moral laws.

Only by rightfully observing the "Hooqooqul-aybaad" or "the social duties of the individuals" could a man perform "Hooqooqullah" (duties and obligations to God). If men were found wanting in their duties towards God, in His mercy He may forgive them; but the violation of the rights of individuals involved infringements of the laws of society and the guilty parties could only be forgiven by those whom they had wronged.

Ali's submission to law

The fame of Ali's impartiality as Chief justice spread far and wide. Had circumstances allowed him to reign peacefully the world would have witnessed a unique combination of divine and secular justice. In the cases which were brought to his court, Ali made no distinction between friend and foe, between his own relatives and persons unknown to him.

An interesting story is told of a case in which Ali was himself the plaintiff. It concerned a coat of mail, lost by Ali at Siffin and picked up by a Christian who then wore it himself. Ali recognising his armour on the Christian, took the miscreant to the Qazi of the city, demanding that the culprit should be dealt with according to the law. When the Qazi asked the Christian if it belonged to him, he pleaded "not guilty" saying, "My possession of it is a clear proof of my ownership."

The Qazi then asked Ali to substantiate his charge by producing a witness. Ali produced his son Hasan as a witness but the Qazi refused to accept his evidence saying that he was a close relative of the plaintiff. Ali did not do anything more than saying that it was surprising that the Qazi did not accept the evidence of one who was pronounced by the Prophet as the Head of the Youth of Paradise. The Qazi was now in a great fix for he was loath to accuse Ali of having brought a false charge against the Christian yet unable to convict the accused for lack of proof. Seeing the dilemma in which the Qazi found himself, Ali however said, "The judge ought not to be influenced by the dignity of any party; merit alone as the judge takes it to be, should be the criterion for deciding the issue." The Qazi then pronounced judgment as follows:

"In the absence of any conclusive evidence, and this the Caliph has failed to produce, the suit is dismissed."

The Christian merrily walked out of the court, but after going only a few paces he turned back, and going up to Ali, said, "O Commander of the Faithful, verily the coat of mail is yours. got it -on the battlefield of Siffin. I only wanted to see how judicial cases are decided in your courts. My Lord, pray stretch forth your hand for I intend to take the oath of allegiance and accept Islam at your hands." So saying he took the oath of fealty to Ali, and accepted Islam. Ali then presented to him that same coat of mail and also a horse, saying, "Blessed art thou indeed. Previously thou wert a soldier of a secular king but henceforth thou hast accepted enlistment as a soldier of God." The new convert is said to have joined Ali's army, fighting in all the battles in which Ali was involved until on the battlefield of Nahrwan he was killed, thus obtaining a martyr's crown.

Ali was also very particular that his magistrates should also follow the principle of strictest impartiality, issuing very strict instructions that they should never take bribes and never pronounce judgments until they were fully satisfied with the merits of the case.

Ali's code of chivalry

Ali's lion-heartedness on the field of battle seems at first sight to be strangely at odds with his gentleness on all other occasions, but one must remember that although his mighty blows frequently cleft his enemies in two, he never departed from his own chivalrous code. This code of chivalry is admirably summed up in the instructions which he gave to his son, Muhammad ibn Hanafia, on presenting him with the flag of command at the battle of Siffin:

"O son ! Let the mountains move from their places but your foot should not falter from that place that has been assigned to you in the battlefield. Install your foot firmly on the ground as though a nail had been driven into it. Let your one jaw rest firmly on the other. Keep an eye on the last rank of your enemy. Enter the battle with a firm determination that you have lent yourself to the cause of God. With all this, always think that success lies in the hands of God. Above all never raise your hand against the sick, women, aged and children. Even if they abuse you, it behoves you to give them refuge. Never mutilate the limbs of the enemy or any other person. Give a decent burial to the dead bodies of your enemies."

Ali's own behaviour at the Battle of the Ditch also illustrates his adherence to this code. While fighting a duel Ali had thrown his opponent, Amar, on the ground and had drawn his sword to cut off his head, when the latter spat on his face. Ali then left his enemy and sheathed his sword. Asked why he left such a dangerous foe alive, Ali said, "I would have killed Amar in the way of God, but when he spat on my face, I got enraged and his death at that juncture would have been attributed to a motive of retaliation rather than in the spirit of Jihad."

His greatness

Muslim scholars unanimously agree with the fact, "that none of the companions of the Holy Prophet was so widely praised by God (through the verses of the Quran) and His Prophet for his virtues and excellence as was Hazrat Ali".

Ahmad ibn Hanbal says, "there hath not come down to us regarding the merits of any one of the Companions of the Apostle of God what hath been transmitted concerning Ali. At times they are represented as so astounding that it was for this reason that the Bani Umayyah were jealous of him and came to hate him. That he did enjoy the special confidence of Muhammad is acknowledged by all."

Numerous sayings of the Holy Prophet exalting the virtues and personal attributes of the first Apostolical Imam have been quoted both by Shia and Sunni scholars, "After the Holy Prophet," says Allama Ibne abil Hadid al-Motazali, 'it was Hazrat Ali who devoted most of his time to the worship of God and spent the nights in silent devotion and the days in fasting. He was brave and forgiving, strong and understanding, religious and secular, He was the only person of his time who mastered 'the Holy Scriptures. Wise men from East and West came to quench their thirst from his unfathomable spring of Divine Knowledge."

Ali's role in Meraj

The most amazing instances of the exaltation of Ali are to be found in the descriptions of the Meraj or Ascension of the Prophet to Heaven, in accordance with the Verse of the Quran (xvii. I) : "Glory to him who carried His servant by night from the sacred temple (of Mecca) to the temple that is more remote, whose precinct We have blessed, that We may show him our signs."

The second volume of Majlisi's Hayatu-l-Kulub has been translated into English under the title the 'Life and Religion of Muhammad,' by Rev. James L. Merrick, Majlisi says (P. 190) that both Shia and Sunnee traditions declare that the Ascension was bodily, and not merely in the Spirit; in the state of wakefulness, not of sleep. On this point, among the old Ulama of the Shias there is no disagreement. The doubts which some have entertained on whether the Ascension was in body or merely in spirit have arisen from lack of knowledge of the subject, or from lack of belief in its Divine Attestations, and from listening to people who are without faith themselves. In his portrayal of all that the Holy Prophet Muhammad heard and saw on this great night journey through the seven heavens, Majlisi mentions what was heard and seen of Ali :

"It is related that Muhammad declared that on the night of Ascension, the Most High commanded me to inquire of the past prophets for what reason they were exalted to that rank, and they all testified, "We were raised up on account of your Prophetical Office, and the Imamate of Ali ibn Abu Talib, and the Imams of your posterity". A divine voice then commanded, 'look on the right side of the empyrean'. I looked and saw the similitude of Ali, and Hasan, and Husain, and Ali ibn al-Husain, and Muhammad Bakir, and Jafar as-Sadiq, and Musa Kazim, and Ali ibn Musa-ar-Reza, and Muhammad Taki, and Ali Naqi, and Hasan Askhari, and Mahdiall performing prayers in a sea of light. 'These', said the Most High, -are my proofs, Vicegerents, and friends, and the last of them will take vengeance on my enemies."

"The Prophet declared that when he performed the Ascension, the angels inquired very particularly about Ali. 'When I arrived,' he continued, 'at the fourth heaven, I saw the angel of death, who said that it was his office to take the soul of every creature by God's command ; but in the case of you and Ali, I will have to take your consent.' When I came under the empyrean, I saw Ali ibn Abu Talib standing there, and said to him, 'O Ali have you got there before me ?' 'Whom are you addressing' asked Gabriel. 'My brother', I replied. 'This is not Ali,' said he, 'but an angel of the Merciful God, whom he created in the likeness of Ali and when those of us privileged to approach near the Deity wish to behold Ali, we visit this angel."

And so Jesus and Moses and Abraham all inquired about Ali and congratulated Muhammad on having left so good a Caliph in his place. The Apostle further related, "On the night of MERAJ, on every one of the curtains of light and on every one of the pillars of the empyrean to which I came, I saw written, There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is the Apostle of God, and Ali ibn Abu Talib is the commander of the Faithful."

Ibne-abil-Hadeed on Hazrat Ali

Allama Ibne abil Hadid al-Motazali, the commentator of Nahjul Balagha, says : "Hazrat Ali had a personality in which opposite characteristics had so gathered that it was difficult to believe that a human mind could manifest such a combination. He was the bravest man that history could cite, such brave persons are always hardhearted, cruel, and eager for blood-shed, but Ali was a kind-hearted sympathetic and warm-hearted person, qualities quite contradictory to the other phase of his character and more suited to pious and God-fearing persons."

"He was a very pious and God-fearing man and often such religious persons avoid society and do not care to mix with men of sin and men of wrath; on the other hand warriors, kings and dictators are usually arrogant and haughty; they consider it below their dignity to mix with the poor, lowly and humble people. But Ali was different. He was a friend to all. As a matter of fact he had a tender spot in his heart for the poor and humble, and for orphans and cripples. To them he always was a kind friend, a sympathetic guide and a fellow sufferer; he was meek with them but haughty and arrogant towards famous warriors and generals, so many of whom he had killed in hand-to-hand combats. He was always kind but strict with wayward persons, sympathetically teaching them the ways of God. He always smiled and passed happy and witty rejoinders, it was difficult to overcome him in debates or repartees ; his rejoinders and retorts always bore a distinct mark of culture, education and knowledge."

"He was a scion of a very illustrious, rich and noble clan, as well as the son-in-law and a great favourite of the Holy Prophet (A.S.) ; at the same time he was the greatest warrior and marshal of his time; yet, in spite of his riches, he ate, dressed and lived like a poor person; to him wealth was for the use of other needy persons, not for himself and his family. Change of times and change of circum stances did not bring any change in his bearing, mien or character. Even when he was acclaimed as the Caliph, he was the same Ali as they had found him to be during the previous regimes."

"Once in the society of Abdullah, son of Imam Malik-ibne-Hunbal, a discussion took place about Ali and his Caliphate; Abdullah brought the discussion to an end saying that the Caliphate did not bring any honour or glory to Ali, but it was itself honoured and glorified by Ali and it received the status actually due to it."

"The world cannot quote an example other than that of Ali of a first class warrior and a marshal who is also a philosopher, a moralist and a great teacher of religious principles and theology. A study of his life shows that his sword was the only help that Islam received during its early days of struggle in its wars of self-defence. For Islam he was the first and the last line of defence; who was there to stand by him in the battles of Badar, Ohad, Khandaq, Khyber and Hunain ? This is one aspect of his life. While the other facet of his character is reflected in his sermons, orders, letters and sayings. What high values of morality they teach, what ethics they preach, what intricate problems of unitarianism they elucidate, how rich they are in philosophy; how they imbibe the spirit of righteousness and teach rulers to become kind, good, benevolent and God-fearing rulers, and subjects to be faithful, sincere and law abiding, how they persuade men to be warriors who can fight only for God, truth and justice, and not mercenaries murdering and plundering for wealth and riches; and how they instruct teachers to teach nothing injurious and harmful to mankind. These are but undisputable proofs of his greatness and spiritual superiority. Has history ever produced a more splendid personality incorporating such variegated characteristics of mind and heart !"

Ali the first in many fields

Ali was the possessor of unique virtues and was the first and foremost person in a number of things. He had no match in the following attributes, to mention only a few :

1. He was of noblest birth for both his father and mother were Hashimites.
2. He was the only person to be born in the Kaaba (the house of God).
3. He was the only Divinely authorised witness and Attestor that Prophet Muhammad is the Messenger of God. (Sura Raad Verse 43, Sura Hood Verse 17 and Sura Saha Verse 6.).
4. He was the first to offer prayers after the Holy Prophet.
5. He was the only one to offer his assistance to the Holy Prophet at the gathering of Dawat-e-Asheera.
6. Ali was the only one (except the Holy Prophet) whom God inspired with Divine Secrets.
7. He was the first to compile and codify the Quran.
8. He had the distinction of being styled as "Brother" by the Prophet on both the occasions of "before Hijrat" at Mecca and after Hijrat at Medina.
9. Ali was the only one named by the Holy Prophet to bathe his body after his death.
10. He was the only warrior to stick to his post on the battlefield in all battles and who never once turned his back.
11. It was he who was appointed Commander in all the battles in which the Holy Prophet did not participate personally and was the Standard Bearer when the Prophet participated.
12. He was the great warrior who succeeded in killing all adversaries who fought against him.
13. It was Ali who caught and conquered pagan 'Jinns' many of whom accepted Islam.
14. The honour of the propagation of the Quranic Sura "Al-Baraat" (the Immunity) fell to Ali's lot, the Prophet saying that either he himself or Ali could do it and no one else, thereby raising him Supreme above all others.
15. It was he on whom the Holy Prophet bestowed the title "a Second Aaron,"
16. The privilege of removing the symbols of Arab paganism from the Kaaba, (after the conquest of Mecca) was also reserved for Ali.
17. Ali had the good fortune to have the sublimest woman of the world Fatima as his wife and a unique father-in-law like the Prophet and sons like Hasan and Husain.
18. Ali had the honour of being nominated by the Holy Prophet as his Successor, Testator and Vicegerent.

19. Ali was also honoured by being styled "Moula" (Master) of the "Ummah" (nation) by the Holy Prophet, by the mandate of God.
20. Ali is the one who (long before the creation of the universe) came into being along with the Holy Prophet each of them being a fragment of the same 'Noor', (Light). Muhammad having the Prophet-hood and Ali having the Wilayath' (Authority).
21. Ali while in the stage of 'Noor' has been the Divine Professor who imparted knowledge to Gabriel and other angels - hence known as the Teacher of Gabriel.
22. Ali is the only one who continues in himself the attributes of all the Prophets put together.
23. Ali is the Head of all the Spiritual Lines of the Ahle-Tariqat and Sufis.
24. Ali is the replica of the Holy Prophet and is to him what the head is to a body.
25. The Prophet and Ali alone could come to the Mosque when under the obligation of a bath.
26. Ali's door, like that of the Prophet, that opened in the Mosque was retained while the doors of all others were closed under a Divine Mandate.
27. Ali is the one who was ordained to assist all Messengers of God from Adam to Jesus, hiddenly and to come out openly to assist the Holy Prophet.
28. Ali is the sole one Divinely designated as the Hand of God, Face of God, Eye of God, Ear of God, Tongue of God and Symbol of God.
29. He is the only one, acknowledgment of whose Wilayath' (authority) along with the Prophethood of Muhammad is the basic requisite for the Prophethood of any Messenger of God.
30. Like the Holy Prophet, Ali was bestowed upon with miracles, such as on two occasions he made the sun come back from the west when it had already set.
31. Besides the Holy Prophet, Ali is the only one, departure of whose soul depends on his own will.
32. He is the distributor of Kausar and will allot Heaven or Hell as deserved.

Further proofs of Ali's greatness

Qais Bin Hazim records :

"I was wandering in the streets of the bazar in Median, when I saw men clustering around one who rode a cow and stood cursing Ali. In the meantime Saad Abi Waqaas happened to pass that way and asked him what made him curse Ali. "Was he not the first to accept Islam? Was he not the first to say his prayers with the Prophet? Was he not the most pious of all? Was he not the greatest scholar?" Waqaas went on recounting Ali's distinctions and in the end said, "Was he not the son-in-law of the Prophet? Was he not the Commander-in Chief of the Prophet's forces in all the wars that the Prophet had to fight?" Then Waqaas turned to the House of Allah and raised both his hands in prayers, "O Allah ! This man is cursing one of Thy beloved; before these people disperse, show them how Mighty Thou art !"

Qais relates, "By Allah ! we had hardly dispersed when his mount plunged into the solid earth, flinging him on to a rock. His head was fractured and he died instantly."

[Mustadrak Vol. 3, p. 499.](#)

The Prophet ordered, "Send for the Emir of the Arabs !" "Aren't you yourself the Emir of the Arabs," interposed Ayesha.

"No !" replied the messenger of Allah. "I'm the Emir of the entire mankind."

When Ali put in an appearance, he ordered Ali to call the Ansars, and when they arrived, the Prophet announced, "O Ansars ! If you hold fast to one whom I point out to you, you will never go astray."

"Do point out to us, O Messenger of Allah," they said. "That man is Ali," said the Prophet. "Regard him as deeply as you regard me; honour him as highly as you honour me. Whatever I'm declaring to you is not from me, but it is all from Allah. Gabriel just conveyed this to me."

[1. Riaz-un-Nazarah Vol. 3, p. 177. \(2\) Izalat-ul-Khifa Maqсад 2, p. 362.](#)

"Ali !" said the Prophet of Allah, "The pride of your place is like that of the House of Allah. People of themselves go to the House of Allah, the House of Allah does not go after the people. So when I am no more, if these people, of themselves, elect you as their Caliph, do become their Caliph. If they do not approach you, never go to them so long as they themselves do not come up to you."

[\(1\) Usd-ul-Ghaba Vol. 4, p. 31. \(2\) Kunooz-ul-Haqaique p. 173.](#)

"Ali and I will be the last word on the Day of Judgment!"

[Selections from Kanz-ul-Ummal p. 34.](#)

Salman reports, having heard the Prophet saying :

"Ali and I, fourteen thousand years before the creation of mankind, were one Light. When Allah created Adam, He split this Light into two, one of which I am and the other is Ali."

[Riaz-un-Nazarah Vol. 2, p. 164.](#)

Some of the Companions of the Prophet were of the opinion that Ali was blessed with such individual traits of character and distinctions that if a single one of them was possessed by all the peoples of the world it was more than enough for their betterment.

[Usd-ul-Ghaba Vol. 4, p. 23.](#)

Hazrat Omar records that the Prophet said :

"None of those bent on achieving distinctions had such advantages to their credit as Ali possessed. He guides his friends on to the straight path and saves them from getting lost."

[Riaz-un-Nazarah Vol. 2, p. 214.](#)

"If all the seven planets," declared Hazrat Omar, "and all the seven heavens are put in one scale of the balance and the faith of Ali in the other, Ali's pan will turn the scales."

(1) [Riaz-un-Nazarah Vol. 2, p. 226.](#) (2) [Izalat-ul-Khifa Maqсад Vol. 2, p. 259 & p. 265.](#)

Ibn-e-Abbas records :

"A mad woman was produced before Omar on the charge of having committed adultery. Omar ordered her to be stoned to death. Ali, passing that way, was informed that a woman belonging to such and such tribe was going to be stoned by the order of Omar. Learning that, Ali sent her back and came up to Omar demanding, 'Don't you know that three kinds of persons cannot be held responsible for any offence? You cannot punish one who has lost his reason until he is cured of madness ; no punishment can be meted out to one sleeping until he is wide awake; nor a child can be held responsible for a crime so long as he does not attain maturity'...At this, Omar ordered her release and recited Allah-o-Akbar."

(1) [Sunan Abi Dawood Vol. 2, p. 227.](#) (2) [Musnad Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal Vol. 1, p. 154.](#) (3) [Istee'ab Vol. 2, p. 474.](#) (4) [Selections from Kanz-ul-Ummal p. 412.](#) (5) [Riaz-un-Nazarah Vol. 2, p. 194. & p. 196.](#) (6) [Izalat-ul-Khifa Maqсад 2, p. 268.](#)

Abul Aswad relates :

"I called on Ali and found him lost in some deep thought, his head hanging on one side."

He said, 'In this town I've heard people speaking the language incorrectly. I should do a book on the grammar of it.' Three days after I paid him a visit again, and he put into my hands a booklet in which he had laid the foundations of the language on which was raised the structure of syntax and conjugation, and other parts of speech saying, 'here is the foundation on which you can build up the structure.'

[Selections from Kanz-ul-Ummal p. 51.](#)

Anas Bin Malik, the companion of the Prophet relates :

"Some one sent a roast bird as an offering to the Prophet, and the Prophet prayed, 'O Allah ! Send that one to me whom Thou lovest the most to partake of the roast along with me.' (The prayer was answered) and Ali made an appearance to join the Prophet in the eating of the roast."

(1) [Jame's Tirmizee p. 461.](#) (2) [Khasais Nasaee p. 21.](#) (3) [Mustadrak Vol. 3, p. 131.](#) (4) [Selections from Kanz-ul-Ummal p. 53.](#) (5) [Riaz-un-Nazarah Vol. 2, p. 160.](#) (6) [Usd-ul-Ghaba Vol. 4, p. 30.](#) (7) [Izalat-ul-Khifa p. 262.](#)

Ali records :

In his illness, the Prophet sent for me, saying, "Call my brother." When I came near to him, he asked me to come nearer, as I went closer to him, he reclined against me and continued like that, holding conversation with me until some spittle fell from his mouth on me. Then he was in his last moments and died in my arms."

(1) Selections from Kanz-ul-Ummal p. 115. (2) Tabaqat Ibn-e-Sad Vol. 2, Qism 2, p. 51.

In the words of Ameer Ali-Hitti-Davenport and Allama Mustafa Beg

"Mild, beneficent, and humane, ready to help the weak and distressed, his life had been devoted to the cause of Islam. His forbearance and magnanimity were misunderstood, and his humanity and love of truth was turned by his enemies to their own advantage."

"Ali is depicted as a man of ruddy complexion, not very tall but extremely strong, inclined to stoutness, with a flowing beard, soft grey eyes, and a look of great amiability and kindness. His bravery had won him the title of the 'Lion of God', his learning that of the 'Gate of Knowledge.' Chivalrous, humane, and forbearing to the verge of weakness, as a ruler he came before his time. Most of the grand undertakings initiated by Omar for the welfare of the people were due to his counsel. Ever ready to succour the weak and to redress the wrongs of the injured, the accounts of his valorous deeds are recited with enthusiasm from the bazars of Cairo to those of Delhi. How the mailclad knight rescued a stranger beset by lions in the desert; how the poor woman, captured by brigands with her wounded and dying husband, waited for the succour which never failed, and how the "Lion of God" appeared and saved them, such stories bring back to Arab life the chivalry of the Arabs-personified in their greatest hero. With his dying breath he inculcated lessons of charity, love, humility and self-abnegation to his sons. He expressly ordered that no harshness should be used towards his murderer, who should be executed with one blow."

As regards his gallantry and boldness, Hitti, a famous European scholar, remarks, "Valliant in battle, wise in counsel, eloquent in speech, true to his friends, magnanimous to his foes, he became both the paragon of the Moslem nobility and chivalry and the Solomon of the Arabic tradition around whose name poems, proverbs, sermonettes and anecdotes innumerable have clustered. His Sabre Dhu-al-Faqar, wielded by the Prophet on the memorable battle-field of Ohad, has been immortalized in words of verse found engraved on many medieval Arab swords, 'La Saifa Illa Dhu-al-Faqar wa-La Fata Illa Ali' (No sword can match Zulfiqar and no young warrior can compete with Ali)."

"He was equally celebrated for his eloquence and valour", says Davenport, while his surname of "The Lion of God", sufficiently attests his prowess and renown of which one out of many instances is that at the siege of Khaiber in 628 A. D. In Ali we find the example of a brave and worthy prince than whom a better is not to be found throughout the Mohammedan World."

Allama Mustafa Beg, a famous Egyptian Scholar, writes in Humatul-Islam, "What can be said about such a Holy personage as Hazrat Ali, who excelled all the companions of the Holy Prophet in his attributes and qualities. He was the most learned person, the bravest man and the most eloquent speaker and orator. His piety, his love of God and his sincerity and fortitude in following religion, were of such a high order that none could aspire to reach him. He, due to his sagacity and thorough knowledge of the human mind, always arrived at correct conclusions and never changed his decisions. He possessed such transcending and peerless qualities which caused many scholars to imagine him to be an incarnation of God. He hated tricks and diplomacy and loved truth and justice; and had it not been for the fear of God, he would have been renowned as the greatest Arab politician."

1 Syed Ameer Ali-A short history of the Saracens. p. 52,

His food and dress

The food that Hazrat Ali ate and the dress he wore were such as even the poorest could afford. It was not because he was poor but it was his desire to lead the life of the poorest person and spend all that could thus be spared for the poor. Below are given a few incidents at the time when he was the Caliph.

1. Imam Ahmad Ibne Hanbal in his 'Musnad' as quoted by Sowaeda-Ibne-Ghaffla :- "One day I went to see Ali in the Government House (Darul Imrah). It was the time of breakfast and before him there was a cup of milk and some barley bread. The bread was dry, stale and hard, and did not contain any butter or oil. It could not be easily broken into pieces, and Ali had to exert himself to break and soften it. I turned towards his slave Fizza and said, 'O Fizza, have you no pity on your master, that you allow him to eat this sort of bread?' She replied, 'He has given us strict instructions that nothing is to be added to his bread and even chaff and husk are not to be separated from the flour. We ourselves eat much better food than this though we are his slaves.' Hearing this, I told Ali, 'O Lord, have pity on yourself, look at your age, your responsibilities, your hard work.' He replied, 'O Sowaeda, you have no idea what the Holy Prophet used to eat. He hardly ate anything for three consecutive days.'"

2. Allama Kamal-ud-din Mohamed-Ibne-Talha-e-Shafeyee in his book 'Matalib-ul-Sour quotes Abdullah Ibne Zurare as saying, "I went to see Hazrat Ali on a day of Id. He asked me to join him in his breakfast, to which I readily agreed. I was surprised at the poor kind of food that was served to us and said, 'O Lord, you are a Caliph and a King. I was expecting that game would be served to us.' Ali replied, 'O Ibne-Zurare, you

have heard of mighty kings who have led lives of luxury. I prefer to be near to God and lead the life of a poor and humble person - a humble labourer.'

3. Millance in his book 'Seer and' and Imam Ahmad in his 'Musnand' quotes the famous 'Tabayee' Ibne AbeeRafay, that he went to Ali on the day of Id and while he was sitting there a bag was brought before him. He -thought that the bag might contain jewels. Ali opened the bag, it contained dry pieces of bread, which he softened with water. Ibne-Abee Rafay asked him the reason for sealing such a bag which even a beggar would not care to steal. Ali smiled and said, 'I keep it sealed because my children try to substitute softer bread containin_ 0,1 and butter.' Ibne Abee Rafay then asked Hazrat Ali, 'Has God prohibited you from eating better kind of food ?' 'No' lie replied, 'but I want to eat the kind of food which the poorest of this realm can afford to eat at least once a day. I shall only improve upon it after I have made them more comfortable. I want to live, feel and suffer like them.'

Imam Ahmad in his book 'Almunaquib' and Ibne Aser in his history, quotes Haroon Ibne Anzaa as saying that he accompanied his father Anzaa, to the 'Khoreniq' castle to meet Hazrat Ali. It was a very cold day is winter had set in, and he found Ali in a very thin cotton garment, and the cold was making him shiver. Anzaa asked him, "O Commander of the Faithful ! God has reserved a share for you and for your family from the Baitul Mal (Government Treasury), why do you not make use of it ?" He replied, "O Anzaa ! I do not want anything from the treasury and this is the dress which I have brought with me from Medina."

Proofs regarding the merits of Ali.

(From Tarikh-al-Khulafa of Jalaluddin-as-Suyuti- as translated from the original Arabic by Major H. S. Jarret, Culcutta edition, 1881)

- 1. The Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal says : There hath not come down to us regarding the merits of any one of the Companions of the Apostle of God, what hath been transmitted concerning Ali. (Al Hakim).*
- 2. Ibn Asakir from Ibn Abbas says : There hath not been revealed in the Book of God (Quran) regarding any one what hath been revealed concerning Ali, and that three hundred verses have been revealed concerning Ali.*
- 3. At-Tabrani and Ibn Abi Hatim record from Ibn Abbas that he said : The Lord never revealed the words 'O True Believers' but that Ali was understood to be the Lord and chief of them; and verily the Lord hath reproved the Companions of the Prophet in various places, but bath never mentioned Ali save with approval.*
- 4. At-Tirmizhi, An-Nasai and Ibn Maja from Habshi b. Jonada say that the Apostle of God said : Ali is a part of me and I of Ali.*
- 5. At-Tabrani records in the Awsat from Jabir b. Abdallah that the Apostle of God said : The people are of various stocks but I and Ali are of one stock.*
- 6. At-Tabrani records in the Awsat and Saghir from Umme-Selma that she narrated, 'I heard the Apostle of God say : Ali is with the Quran and the Quran with Ali, they shall not be divided until they arrive at the fountain of Kausar in Paradise.'*
- 7. Ibn Sa'd records on the authority of Ali that he said : By Allah a verse of the Quran was never revealed but I know regarding what it was revealed and where it was revealed and concerning whom it was revealed, for my Lord hath given unto me a wise heart and an eloquent tongue.*
- 8. Ibn Sa'd and others on the authority of Aby Tofail record that Ali said : Ask ye me regarding the Book of God, for verily there is not a verse but I know whether it was revealed by night or by day, in the plains or on the mountains.*
- 9. At-Tirmizhi and Al-Hakim record from Ali that the Apostle of God said : I am the City of Knowledge and Ali is its gate.*
- 10. Ibn Mas'ud says that the Prophet said : To look upon Ali is Devotion.*
- 11. Ibn Asakir on the authority of Caliph Abubakr records that the Prophet said : Looking upon Ali is worship.*
- 12. Muslim records on the authority of Ali that he said : By Him who hath cleft the seed and created the soul, verily the Prophet promised me that none but a true believer should love me, and none but a hypocrite hate me.*
- 13. At-Tirmizhi from Abu Sa'id al Khudri says that he said : We used to distinguish the hypocrites by their hatred of Ali.*

14. At-Tabrani from Umme Selma says that the Apostle of God said : He who hath loved Ali, verily he hath loved me, and he who hated Ali, verily he hath hated me, and who hath hated me, he hath hated the Lord.
15. Abu Ya'la and Al-Bazzar from Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas say that the Apostle of God said : Who grieveth Ali, grieveth me.
16. Ahmad records and Al Hakim verifies it on the authority of Umme Selma that she narrated, 'I heard the Apostle of God say : He who hath reviled Ali, verily, he hath reviled me.'
17. Sai'd b. Al-Mosyyeb says that Omar b. Al-Khattab used to beg God to preserve him from a perplexing case NA hen the father of Al-Hasan was not present to decide; and that Omar said : None of the Companions used to say 'ask ye of me', except Ali.
18. At-Tabrani says in the Awsat from Ibn Abbas that he said : Ali possessed 18 eminent qualities which belonged to no other of his people.
19. Al-Bazzar records on the authority of Sa'd, that the Apostle of God said to Ali : It is not lawful for anyone to be in the mosque, while under the obligation of performing a total ablution, except for me and for thee.
20. Abu Ya'la from Abu-Horeira says that Omar b. al-Khattab said : Verily, Ali hath been endowed with three qualities, of which had I but one, it would be more precious to me than were I given high bred camels. It was asked of him what they were; he replied : His marriage with Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet ; his remaining in the mosque while that is permitted to him, which is not lawful for me; and his carrying the Standard on the day of Khaibar.
21. The two Sheikhs (Bokhari and Muslim) record on the authority of Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas that the Apostle of God left Ali b. Abi Talib behind as his Viceregent during the expedition of Tabuk, and Ali said, "O Apostle of God, dost thou leave me behind among the women and children ?" He replied : "Art thou not content to be to me in relation of Aaron to Moses, save that there shalt be no prophet after me?"
22. And from Sahl b. Sa'd that the Apostle of God said on the day of Khaibar : I will surely give the Standard tomorrow to a man, at whose hands the Lord will give victory, one who loveth God and His prophet and whom God and his prophet love; and the people passed the night in perplexity as to the one among them to whom it would be given. And when they entered upon the dawn, they went early to the Apostle of God, each one of them hoping that it would be given to him, but he said : Where is Ali the son of Abu Talib ? They said to him, 'He complaineth of pain in his eyes.' He replied, 'Then send for him,' and they brought him and the Apostle of God applied his saliva upon his eyes and prayed for him, and he was healed so that it was as if he had no pain, and he gave him the Standard.
23. Muslim records on the authority of Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, that when this verse 'Let us call together, our sons and your sons etc. Sur. iii-54 was revealed, the Apostle of God summoned Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain, and said, 'O God! these are my family.'
24. At-Tabrani records in the Awsat and Abu No'aim in the Dalael on the authority of Zadan that Ali was relating a tradition when a man accused him of speaking falsely, and Ali said to him, 'Shall I curse thee if I have lied' and he said 'curse' and Ali cursed him, and he did not quit the place till his sight left him.
25. Abul Qasim-al-Zajjaji narrates in his Dictations that Ali wrote a work on the principles of the Arabic language and the Grammar of the Arabic language.

Ali's superiority recognised by the Holy Prophet

The Holy Prophet recognised the superiority of Ali in many of his sayings. The most important of them are :

1. "Ali would appear to the dwellers of paradise as a morning star."

(Sawai'q Muhari'qa)

2. Addressing his daughter, Fatima, the Holy Prophet said, "O thou daughter of mine! Of all the creatures in this world, God has selected two persons, one of them is your father and the other is your husband."

(Izalat-al-Khulafa)

3. "Whosoever wants to make his life and death like that of mine and is desirous of entering heaven, it behoves him to befriend Ali because he would neither let his friends be ejected from paradise nor allow them to enter there in ignorance."

(Tarikh-al-Khulafa)

4. Addressing his companion. Omar, the Holy Prophet said, "O thou Omar ! Should you behold that Ali is on one side and the rest of the world on the other, surely it will be incumbent on you that you should follow Ali because he would never lead any one to the path of destruction and will never relinquish the path of right."

(Jamia-ul-Saghir Sayuti)

5. The Holy Prophet in one of his Khutbas said, "God has so much exalted my brother Ali that his numerous virtues could not be counted easily : whosoever from amongst you narrated one of his excellences, God will forgive his past and future sins; and whosoever will record one of his excellences, the angels will bless him as long as his writing remains; whosoever will read about his virtues with eyes, the sins of the eye will be forgiven to him. Beware ! That man is not steadfast in faith who does not love Ali and does not shun his enemies."

CHAPTER XX: THE DISAFFECTION OF THE KHARIJITES

The prospect of a truce between Ali and Moawiya did not please the Kharijites. For one thing, a strong and stable government would put an end to the plundering raids on which so many of them depended for enormous wealth and booty. At the same time the fanatically pious amongst them longed fervently for the restoration of God's kingdom on earth and believed that this could never be accomplished while Ali and- Moawiya remained alive. To the Kharijites, they were both ambitious tyrants who had usurped power and established ungodly kingdoms in defiance of the will of God.

A concerted plot

Some of the remaining Kharijites, after the battle of Nahrwan, had gone to Mecca, to find sanctuary in Kaaba, the house of God. Here they held frequent religiopolitical meetings in the holy sanctuary, devising plans to avenge their relatives who had fallen at Nahrwan. Here, too, they planned the assassination of Ali and Moawiya, adding a third name to the list of the ungodly that of Amr bin Aas. They feared that Amr bin Aas, the wily umpire, might lay claim to the Caliphate for himself in the event of the death of Moawiya.

The three boldest of these Mccan Kharijites, Abdur Rahman ibn Muljim al - Sarimi, Burk ibn Abdullah, and Amr bin Bakr volunteered to rid the world of the tyrants. Abdur Rahman agreed to kill Ali, Burk to kill Moawiya and Amr to kill Amr bin Aas, now Governor of Egypt.

The morning of Friday, the 19th of Ramazan, was fixed for the execution of the plot. The three assassins then poisoned their swords and swore to kill their enemies or perish in the holy deed. Then they separated, Abdur Rahman taking the road to Kiifa, Burk that to Damascus and Amr that to Egypt.

Abdur Rahman's proposal of marriage

Abdur Rahman arrived in Kufa and began making secret plans. Help came to him from an unexpected quarter, for he fell passionately in love with a woman who had a great hatred for Ali. This was the beautiful Qutaum, whose father and brother, according to one account and, whose uncle and husband, according to another, had been slain by Ali in the Battle of Nahrwan. Qutaum was outstandingly beautiful and was described by an Arab chronicler as possessing "a face which would be the just reward of the virtuous" and of "jet black tresses which fell on her cheek and resembled the ignominious record of a villain's guilt." Abdur Rahman was quite unable to resist such attractions and when he proposed a match, Qutaum declared herself willing to marry him on three conditions. He was to give her three thousand dirhems in cash, a male and a female slave and the head of Caliph Ali. Abdur Rahman had come to Kufa with the express purpose of killing Ali and he therefore found no difficulty in agreeing to her terms. Qutaum told him that he must attack Ali when he was least expecting it. "Should you escape alive", she continued, "you will have my hand and a happy domestic life with me; but should you perish in the assault, you will enjoy a better life in Heaven above than you would have done on earth with a poor soul like me."

In order to help her suitor, Qutaum asked a man of her tribe, Werdan, to join in the conspiracy, and it was also through her persuasion that Shub'ib bin Bijrah of the tribe of Ashjah agreed to join in the plot. The three conspirators now anxiously waited for the arrival of the 19th of Ramazan-the day fixed for the ghastly murder.

Moawiya escapes with a wound

Having reached Damascus, Burk ibn Abdullah on the appointed day mingled with the worshippers at the morning service and stabbed Moawiya who, dressed in silken clothes was conducting it. It is said that the sword slipped and Moawiya was wounded in the loins. Burk was caught redhanded and when brought before Moawiya boasted that his associate Abdur Rahman, would by that time have killed Ali in Kufa. To this Moawiya replied, "Ali may have escaped in the same way as I." Moawiya then ordered his men to cut off the feet of his would be assassin and take out his tongue. Thereupon Burk was dragged out of his presence to be further tortured and put to a cruel and ignominious death.

Moawiya's wound did not prove fatal. His physician gave him two alternatives, one being cautery and the other to drink a draught which would render him impotent. Moawiya chose the second, saying, "My two sons, Abdullah and Yezid, are enough for me and I do not require more." It was characteristic that after his recovery, he took elaborate precautions for his future safety. Part of the mosque was railed off and it was further guarded by soldiers with drawn swords, ever ready to defend him in an emergency. Moawiya was far too much in love with life ever again to run the risk of losing it. How different his attitude was from that of Ali will be seen later in this chapter.

Amr bin Aas escapes death

In Egypt Amr bin Bakr went to the mosque on the morning of the 19th Ramazan to assassinate Amr bin Aas. Luck favoured Amr bin Aas, who was prevented by an attack of colic from leading the divine service on that fatal day. In his stead his deputy, Kharja bin Huzafa was officiating. Amr bin Bakr, who had never seen either of them before and was unaware of the change, slew Kharja with one stroke of his sword. When asked later by Amr bin Aas what his motive for the murder had been, he replied, "O thou sinner, the stroke was not intended for any other than thyself." "But God", said the wily Governor, "thou shalt be slain." Amr bin Bakr was forthwith put to a cruel death.

Ali's nightly vigils in the mosque at Kufa

Of the three assassins, it was Abdur Rahman who had the easiest task. Ali, had long been accustomed to spend night after night alone in the mosque, in prayer and meditation. It was not unusual for him to kneel on his prayer mat at sunset and there pass the whole night long in prayer until the dawn of the next day. This habit of his had occasioned alarm among his followers who were sincerely devoted to him. "Is it not sheer folly," they said, "to attend the mosque at night, unaccompanied and without escort, in the midst of so many enemies? We who are loyal to him will take precautions for his safety which he himself neglects." A small group took it in turns to guard Ali, unknown to the Caliph himself. When eventually he was apprised of the existence of this volunteer guard he said to them, "Are you here to defend me from the decrees of heaven or against the hostilities of my enemies?" "Lord", they replied, "who can defend you against the decrees of heaven! We guard you against the evil plans of your enemies and their treacherous designs. We are only here to see that no one injures or assails you." "Then" said Ali, "you

must remember that the fate of even the most insignificant creature on this earth is controlled and supervised by God." With this, he dismissed the guard and forbade their nightly vigils.

CHAPTER XXI: THE DEATH OF ALI

Ali had prophesied his departure from this world several days before hand, and on the day of his martyrdom he mysteriously desired his sons Hasan and Husain to offer their morning prayers in the house and not to accompany him as they usually did to the mosque. When Ali was leaving his abode, observes S. Ockley in his famous work the History of the Saracens, the household birds began making a great noise and when one of Ali's servants attempted to quieten them, Ali said, "Leave them alone, for their cries are only lamentations foreboding my death."

The fateful nineteenth of Ramazan

On the 19th of Ramazan Hazrat Ali came to the mosque in Kufa for his morning prayers. Ali gave the call for prayer and became engaged in leading the congregation. Abdur Rahman Muljim pretending to pray, stood just behind Ali, and when Ali was in a state of prostration, Abdur Rahman dealt a heavy stroke with his sword, inflicting a deep wound on Ali's head.

The Holy Prophet had prophesied the assassination of Ali and his issues. Regarding Ali he had said, "O Ali! I see before my eyes thy beard dyed with the blood of thy forehead."

His last moments

His blood-drenched lips parted into a thanksgiving prayer and he said, "Lord! I thank Thee for rewarding me with martyrdom; how kind art thou and how gracious. May thy mercy further lead me to the realm of Thy grace and benevolence." The murderer was caught and brought before him. When Hazrat Ali saw that the ropes with which his murderer was tied were cutting into his flesh, he forgot his own agony, and requested that he be untied and treated more humanely. Touched by these words the murderer started to weep. A smile played on Hazrat Ali's lips and in a faint voice he said, "It is too late to repent now, you have done your deed. Was I a bad Imam or an unkind Ruler?" He expressly ordered that no harshness should be shown towards his murderer. He should not be tortured before his execution, his body should not be mutilated, and members of his family should not be made to suffer on account of his crime and his property should not be confiscated. Ali's justice was always tempered with mercy, even to the worst of his own enemies. Ali was taken home from the mosque, and lay mortally wounded, yet he was answering all questions put to him. His sons Hasan and Husain were given the last advice, and finally Ali told them that his coffin was to be lifted only from behind, as the front would of itself be automatically carried, and they would have to take the route guided by the coffin itself. At the place where the coffin would stop, they would find a grave already dug for him. Hazrat Ali also requested his sons that he should be buried secretly, because he feared that his enemies would desecrate his grave. The coffin stopped at Najaf which is about four miles from Kufa.

Ali's last testament

To his sons Ali spoke thus : "Remain steadfast in piety and resign yourself to the will of God. Never aspire to anything which is beyond your reach. Always be truthful and merciful towards the orphans. Help the poor and needy, and try to live in the world in a way which may help it to become better. Stop the tyrant from his oppressions. Assist the afflicted and act upon the commandments of God; and do not be put off by any obstacles. Lastly, ask you to bury me in some place which is unknown to the public. No less than 10,000 persons have I killed by my own hands on different occasions, and I do not wish their relatives to violate the sanctuary of my repose, and expose my corpse to indignity."

After this talk with Hasan and Husain, Ali addressed his third son, Muhammad ibn Hanfia, and said, "You have heard what I have told your other two brothers. I also want you to do the same. In particular, I command you to respect and obey your elder brothers. They have a right to claim your fealty. Always do whatever they command you. He entrusted all to the care of his eldest son Hasan, except Abbas. Then he heard Abbas, hardly twelve years old, sobbing. Hazrat Ali asked him to come near and gave his hand to his second son Husain, saying : "Husain, this child I am entrusting to your care. He will represent me on the day of your supreme sacrifice and will lay down his life in defending you and your dear ones."

And turning to Abbas, he said: "Abbas, my child, I know your unbounded love for Husain. When that day comes, consider no sacrifice too great for Husain and his children."

Then, addressing the other members of his family, he continued, "O thou Hashimites! After I am gone, do not spill Muslim blood, and do not kill any one except my murderer."

Right until the end Ali continued to talk of the good of the Muslim community, to fulfil the commands embodied in the Holy Quran and to submit to the will of God. Repeatedly calling upon the name of God and constantly re-affirming the belief in the Unity of God and in the Divine Mission of the Holy Prophet. Ali was to survive the mortal wound for three days. Speech was finally silenced at the approach on the third day.

The pulpit in the mosque at Kufa

Ibn Jubayr says, "in the mosque at Kufa there is a pulpit which is surrounded by a circle of steps of sandalwood.

It is elevated above the court and is like a small mosque. This pulpit is a memorial to the Amir-ul-mumineen Ali ibn Abu Talib, and it was at this place that the miserable and accursed Abdur Rahman ibn Muljim struck him with a sword. People repeat a form of salutation here and pray and weep." ¹

¹ Travels of ibn Jubayr. Wright's Text, Gibb Memorial, Vol. V. page 211

CHAPTER XXII: NAJAF

The visit of Prophet Abraham and Isaac and Abraham's prediction and desire to buy the Valley of Peace.

Those who have visited Najaf will remember vividly that to the north and east of the town there are acres of graves and myriads of domes of various colours and in various stages of disrepair. Whoever goes to Najaf will follow a road that approaches the town by a winding course through this vast cemetery. The Prophet Abraham had come to this place along with Isaac; there had been many earthquakes in the vicinity, but while Abraham remained there, there were no tremors. On the night, however, when Abraham and Isaac went to a different village, and sure enough Najaf was visited with another earthquake. When they returned, the people were most eager for them to make Najaf their permanent dwelling-place. Abraham agreed to do so on condition that they would sell him the valley behind the village for cultivation. Isaac protested and said that this land was neither fit for farming nor grazing, but Abraham insisted and assured him that the time would come when there would be a tomb there with a shrine, at which seventy thousand people would gain absolutely undisputed entrance to Paradise, and be able also to intercede for many others. ²

The valley that Abraham wanted to buy is called the Valley of Peace (Wadiu's-Salaam), and it is related on the authority of the fourth Imam, that Ali once said that this Valley of Peace is part of Heaven and that there is not a single one of the believers in the world, whether he dies in the east or west, but his soul will come to this Paradise to rest. ³ "As there is nothing hidden in this world from my eyes," Ali went on to say, "I see all the believers seated here in groups and talking with one another."

How Najaf was given its name is explained in the tradition. At first there was a mountain there, and when one of the sons of Noah refused to enter the Ark, he said that he would sit on this mountain until he would see where the water would come. A revelation came therefore to the mountain, "Do you undertake to protect this son of mine from punishment?" And all at once the mountain fell to pieces and the son of Noah was drowned. In place of the mountain a large river appeared, but after a few years the river dried up, and the place was called NayJaff, meaning, "the dried river." ⁴

And so as per the prediction of Abraham, Hazrat Ali was buried here.

Ali is absent today from our midst only physically. His soul even to this day is the greatest spiritual resort for everyone who seeks the help of God through his medium. Thousands and thousands of people call out to him in their difficulties, and the word "Ya Ali Madad" automatically comes to them. A famous prayer known as "NADEY ALI" (Call Ali) which is given on page iv is recited wherever around the lovers of Ali.

² Majlisi op. cit. page 108

³ Majlisi op. cit. page 111

⁴ Majlisi op. cit. page 111

The Mausoleum

"The Mausoleum itself of Hazrat Ali at Najaf, is breathtaking. There is one large central dome which stands out of a square-shaped ornate structure at the two sides of which are two minarets. The predominant colour of the exterior is gold, bright shining gold and the entire exterior of the mausoleum is inlaid with a mosaic pattern of light powder blue, white marble, gold again with an occasional splash of Middle East rust. "So says D. F. Karaka after his visit to Najaf, and further adds, "I have sat and wondered at the marbled splendour of our Taj Mahal, the tomb which Shah Jahan built for his Empress Mumtaz Mahal, but despite its beauty, the Taj appears insipid in comparison with this splash of colour at Najaf. The tomb surpassed anything I have seen in gorgeous splendour. All the great kings of the world put together could not have a tomb as magnificent as this, for this is the tribute which kings and peasants have built together to enshrine the mortal remains of the great Ali."

Countless number of people from all over the world flock to his tomb day after day to pay their respects and to offer salutations and to pray to Allah seeking his intercession. And those who cannot afford to go there personally, are constantly praying to Allah to help them to visit the shrine of their Maula Ali, and when somebody goes on a pilgrimage to Najaf, they request him to offer salutations on their behalf, and to pray to God-for some particular favour-and to seek Hazrat Ali's intercession.

May God in His infinite Mercy help us to follow the teachings of one regarding whom the Holy Prophet has said. "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate."

Thus ended the last chapter of the history of a life which from the beginning to its end was replete with noble deeds, pious thoughts and sublime words, and every hour of which was a crowded hour of glorious life.

The Holy Quran says : "And do not speak of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead : nay, they are alive, but you do not perceive." (chapter II-Verse 154).

The deer hunting incident of Harun-ar-Rashid

"During the reigns of the Umayyad Caliphs his blessed resting-place could not be disclosed, and so it was also under the Abbasids until the reign of Harun-ar-Rashid. But in the year 175 A.H. (791 A.D.), Harun happened to go hunting in these parts, and the deer he was chasing took refuge on a small piece of raised ground. However much he asked his hunting dogs to capture the quarry, they refused to go near this spot. He urged his horse to this place, and the horse too refused to budge; and on this, awe took possession of the Caliph's heart, and he immediately started to make inquiries of the people of the neighbourhood, and they acquainted him with the fact that this was the grave of Hazrat Ali ibn Abu Talib, the cousin and son-in-law of the Holy Prophet. Harun ordered a tomb to be erected over the grave, and people soon began to settle down in its vicinity."¹

¹ The Shrine of Ali at Najaf from "The shi'ite Religion by Dwight M. Donaldson

CHAPTER XXIII: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PILGRIMAGE TO THE TOMB OF ALI

This is based on traditions from the other Imams. There is a saying attributed to the Imam Jafar-as-Sadiq, "whoever visits this tomb of his own free will and believing in the right of Ali-that he was the Imam to whom obedience was required and the true Caliph-for such a pilgrim the Most High will register very great merit." And when a visitor came in person to visit Imam Jafar-as-Sadiq and remarked that he had neglected to go to the tomb of Ali, the Imam rebuked him: "You have done badly, surely if it were not that you are one of our community, I would certainly not look towards you: Do you neglect to make the pilgrimage to the grave of one whom God and the angels visit, whom the prophets visit, and the believers visit?"

The pilgrim replied, "I did not know." The Imam continued, "Understand that the Amir-ul-Momineen is in the sight of God better than all the Imams, and to him belong the merit of the works of all the Imams, in addition to which he has the merit of his own works."¹

Salutations to Hazrat Ali Alaihis Salaam-1

Before making the visit to the Shrine, according to Imam Jafar-as-Sadiq, the pilgrim should first bathe and put on clean clothing and afterwards anoint himself with perfume. The formal prayer of salutation that is given by al-Kulaini ², and which is very similar to that given by Ibn Babawaihi ³, begins as follows :

Peace be unto thee, O Friend of God; Peace be unto thee, O Proof of God;
Peace be unto thee, O Caliph of God; Peace be unto thee, O Support of Religion;
Peace be unto thee, O Heir of the Prophets;
Peace be unto thee, O Guardian of the Fire and Paradise;
Peace be unto thee, O Master of the Cudgel and the brand-iron;
Peace be unto thee, O Prince of the Believers.

I TESTIFY that thou art the Word of Piety, the Door of Guidance, the Firm Root, the Solid Mountain, and the Right Road.

I TESTIFY that thou art the Proof of God to His Creation. His witness to His Servants, His Trustee for His Knowledge, a Repository of His Secrets, the place of His Wisdom, and a Brother of His Apostle and I TESTIFY that thou wert the First Choice of the Holy Prophet. May the favour of God be upon thee, O Prince of Believers, upon thy spirit, and upon thy body.

In his Manual for Pilgrims, Majlisi gives eight long prayers that are appropriate at the time of the pilgrimage to Najaf, ⁴ and most of these prayers are attributed to different Imams and have been handed down for centuries, and have been used over and over again by hundreds of thousands of trustful pilgrims who go to the Shrine of Ali at Najaf.

¹ Majlisi, Tofatu'z-Za' Irin, p. 50

² Kulaini, Kafi, Vol, II, p. 321

³ Ibn Babawaihi, Man la yanduru hu'i-Fakih p. 226

⁴ Majlisi, op, cit, p, 58-92

Salutations to Hazrat Ali Alaihis Salaam - 2

As-Salaamo alaika aiyyo-hal wasee-yul barrut taqee.

As-Salaamo alaika aiyyo-han naba-ul-azeem.

As-Salaamo alaika aiyyo-has siddee-kur rasheed.

As-Salaamo alaika aiyyo-hal barrooz-zakee.

As-Salaamo alaika yaa waseeya Rasooley Rabbil Aalemeen.

As-Salaamo alaika yaa khay-a-ratallahey alal khalqey ajma-een.

Ash-hado annaka habeebullahey wa khas-satullahey wa khaley-satuh.

As-Salaarno alaika yaa walee-Allahey wa mauzey-aa seerreyhee wa aibata illmeyhee wa haazeyna wah-eehee bey abce anta wa oommee yaa Amir-al-Tvlomeeneena bey abee anta wa oommee yaa Hujjatalahey alal anaamey bey abee anta wa oommee yaa baabal maqaamey bey abee anta wa oommee.

Yaa noorallahith-taammey.

ash-hado annaka qad ballagta anillahey wa an Rasoolleyhee sallallaaho alaihey wa aaleyhee maa hoommilita wa ra-aita mastohfizta wa hafizta mastoo deyta wa hallaa-lallahey wa harramta haraamallahey wa atmamta ahkamallahey wa lam tata-adda hoodoodallahey abadtallaha mookhleysan hatta atakal yaqeen wa sallallaho alaika wa alal as immatey min baadeyka.

Salutations be unto thee, O Successor of the Prophet, and O One Holy and Selected.

Salutations be unto thee, O Support of Religion.

Salutations be unto thee, O Heir of the Prophets, and the Repository of His Knowledge.

Salutations be unto thee, O Pious and Purified.

Salutations be unto thee, O Successor of the Prophet of Allah-the Creator of all the worlds.

Salutations be unto thee, O Proof of Allah for all His creation.

I bear witness that thou art the Chosen of Allah and one very near to Him.

Salutations be unto thee, O Saint of Allah, and O one who understands the Secrets of Allah, the Knower of His Commands, and the Treasurer of His Divine Knowledge.

My parents be sacrificed upon thee, O Commander of the faithful,

My parents be sacrificed upon thee, O Trustee of Allah for His creatures,

My parents be sacrificed upon thee, O Gateway to Paradise,

My parents be sacrificed upon thee, O Light of Allah.

I bear witness that thou didst preach the Code of Allah and His Prophet (the Blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny), and thou didst shoulder the responsibility to guide the people-to safeguard the Faith and to propagate His Religion, and thou didst summon men to goodness and thou didst forbid what was evil, and thou didst conduct for Allah, the kind of steadfastness that needs to be maintained, and thou didst never transgress the limits of Allah, and thou didst pray to Allah with a firm sincerity and wondrous Faith, and may Allah shower His blessings upon thee and the Imams after thee.

Salutation to any of the Imams (Ziarat-E-Jamia)

A prayer for the use of pilgrims to the shrines of any of the Imams is attributed by Ibn Babawaihi to the Imam Ali an-Naqi. Someone asked him, "O Descendant of the Prophet of Allah, teach me the good and perfect word, that I may repeat it whenever I visit the tomb of any of the Imams." He replied, "When you enter the court of one of these tombs, stand and say:

"I bear witness that there is no god but the one Allah, and He has no partner; and I bear witness that Muhammad, blessing be upon him and his descendants, is the servant of Allah and was sent by Him."

The Imam then added these instructions, "It is necessary that you should have bathed, and when you enter the court and see the tomb, stand and repeat thirty times, 'Allah is great.' Proceed, then pause and repeat again thirty times, 'Allah is great.' Afterwards you may go close to the tomb and repeat forty times, 'Allah is great.' When the one hundredth time will have been completed then pray as follows :
"Peace be upon thee, O ye of the Household of the Prophet, of the place of the Prophet, the place frequented by the angels, where revelation was given, where mercy was shown, where learning is kept and wisdom is complete; the place of guidance and where forgiveness is perfect. You are the Lords of all Bounty, the Elements of all Goodness, the Pillars of Virtue, the Governors of the Servants of God, the Supporters of the Cities, the Doors of the Faith, the Trusted of Allah, the Progeny of the Prophets, the Choicest of those sent, the Descendants of the Best of Allah's Creation--may the mercy and blessing of Allah be upon you."

"Peace be upon the true Imams, upon the Lights in Darkness, upon the Manifestations of Piety, the Possessors of Reason, the Masters of Sagacity, the Caves of Refuge, the Heirs of the Prophets, the Exalted Examples (from Allah) those who summon men to goodness, who are the Proofs of Allah upon the Earth, at the beginning and at the end-may the mercy and blessing of Allah be upon you."

"I testify that there is no god but the one Allah, and He has no partner. He has given witness to Himself, and so have the angels and the learned of those whom He has created borne witness to Him. There is no god except Allah who is mighty and wise, and I bear witness that Muhammad is his servant, the Chosen servant, and the Apostle who has pleased Him, and whom He sent with the true Faith, that he should make it prevail over all religions (Surah xlviii 28), notwithstanding the opposition of those who associate partners with Allah."

"I bear witness that you are indeed the Imams, who indicate the true way, the ones who have found Guidance, who are Sinless, the Noble, the Near to Allah, the Pious, the Upright, the Elect, the Obedient to Allah, who are firm adherents to His commands. You are those who fulfil His will, and who are saved by His goodness, for God chose to impart His learning to you, chose you to understand what is not revealed and to know His secrets; and God has appointed you to exercise His authority, and has made you victorious by His guidance. He has given you His own Proof, His Light, and has helped you with His Spirit. He has designated you to be His Representatives, His Caliphs and the Guardians of His mysteries; the Repositories of His learning; the Trusted with His wisdom; the Interpreters of His revelation; the Standards for His servants; the Minarets for His cities; and the Proofs of His way. Allah has chosen to keep you from errors and rebellion. He has kept you from pollution and impurity (Surah xxxiii 33). Therefore you have exalted Allah's glory and have dignified His name and praised His goodness. You have constantly thought of Him and have kept His covenant. In your obedience to Him you have received counsel in your outer and inner lives. Thus you have summoned men to Allah by wisdom and good preaching (Surah xvi 126). You have given your lives to please Him and have endured what has happened to you for His sake. You have established the Prayers and the Alms, have commanded the good and forbidden the evil, and you have conducted for Allah the kind of Holy War that needs to be carried on."

When the pilgrim has finished his prayers at the appointed places in the shrine of an Imam and is ready to say "Farewell", he should pray as follows :

"Peace be upon thee, the peace invoked by those who say farewell, not wishing you evil, not deprecating you, and not with envy; may the mercy and blessing of Allah be upon thee, O Household of the Prophet, for He is the Glorious and the Accepted. Peace be upon thee, the peace of the friend who does not try to offer anything to thee, and who does not approach thee indirectly, and who does not come reluctantly. May Allah not let this visit to thee be my last, this coming to the place of your martyrdom, the place of your burial. Peace be unto thee, and may Allah include me among your adherents and cause me to arrive at the Hauz-i-Kausar (the "Pond of Abundance" in Paradise), and appoint me among your followers. May you cause Allah to be pleased with me and give me a place in your bounty. Let me live at the time of your returning and have part in your government. Accept my efforts on your behalf, and may my sins be forgiven because of your intercession. Overlook my faults by your friendship and grant me progress by your favour. Let me attain nobility through obedience to thee, and become dear to Allah through your guidance.

Appoint me among those whose hearts are changed and saved. Grant that I may prosper, and may be forgiven and favoured, having found grace in Allah's goodness, having been fortunate in receiving the best of things that are attained by pilgrims who are your friends and followers. Grant that I may have something worthwhile to bring.

May Allah grant me the opportunity to make the pilgrimage again, and the opportunity to return to eternal life by true purposes-by faith, by discipline, by humility. And may Allah grant that I may have daily food that is plentiful and permitted and clean."

"O Allah do not decree that this is to be my last pilgrimage. But wilt Thou keep the Imams reminded of me, and send blessing upon them, and make necessary the forgiveness of my sins! And I may enjoy that mercy and goodness and blessing, self control, salvation, light, faith and high favour-such as Thou hast appointed for those who are their friends, those of whom Thou hast required obedience to the Imams, those who are eager to make pilgrimages to their tombs, and those who are near to Thee and to them."

And then, as he prays directly for the Imams, the pilgrim becomes himself an intercessor on behalf of the several members of the Prophet's family :

"My father, my mother, my life and all that I have are dedicated to thee. Keep me in your regard and cherish me among your followers. Let me profit by your intercession and mention me before your Preserver. O Allah, grant Thy blessing to Muhammad and his family, and cause my greeting to reach their spirits and their bodies. Peace be upon thee and upon all the Imams, with Allah's blessing and

mercy. And may the mercy of Allah be upon the Prophet and his family, peace and great mercy, for surely Allah is enough, and what a sufficiency!"

After giving this prayer, Majlisi adds as a personal observation that "this is the best of the general prayers of pilgrimage, both in its text and its authority, and it should be read at every feast of mourning and on every visit to a sacred tomb."

A Shorter Salutation to any of the Imams

A shorter form of Salutation for the use of pilgrims to the shrines of any of the Imams is attributed by Majlisi to Imam Ali Reza. Majlisi quotes "By this salutation which is appropriate for each and every Imam, their help sought, needs may be made known to them, and blessings may be solicited."

"Peace be to the friends of the chosen ones of Allah;
Peace be to the Trusted and Favoured of Allah;
Peace be to the Helpers and Representatives of Allah;
Peace be to the places where Allah has been made known;
Peace be to the places where Allah is remembered;
Peace be to those who have revealed Allah's commands;
Peace be to those who call upon Allah;
Peace be to those who obey what Allah has approved;
Peace be to the tested followers of Allah's will;
Peace be to those who are Proofs for Allah (the Imams);
Peace be upon their friends, for they are the friends of Allah;
As likewise their enemies are the enemies of Allah;
Those who have known them have surely known Allah;
And those ignorant of them are ignorant of Allah;
Those who take them by the hand, and commit themselves to them,
Have given their hands to Allah;
But those who abandon them, have truly abandoned Allah,
I bear witness before Allah that I am loyal to whoever is loyal to thee, and I am ready to fight those who are not loyal to thee."

PILGRIMAGE BY PROXY

Definite instructions for the pilgrimage by proxy are given by Shaikh Tusi as follows :

"Anyone who goes on a pilgrimage as a proxy for a believing brother should say (after he has performed his ablutions and attended to the necessary requirements of the pilgrimage), 'O Allah, keep me from weariness or illness or disorder or weakness, and reward ¹ ... the son of ² ... for this pilgrimage, and reward me for completing it.' And after he has made the pilgrimage, at the end he should say, 'Peace be on thee, O my master, from ³ ... the son of ⁴ ... I have come to thee as a pilgrim on his account, so intercede for him with Allah."

Then he may offer Salutations on his account, or he may offer any of the set Salutations that are written to meet this situation.

1 Here name the person

2 Here name the father of the person.

3 Here name the person

4 Here name the father of the person.

THE HOLY QURAN AND AMIRUL-MOMINEEN ALI IBNE ABI TALEB.

The Holy Prophet has declared :

"Innal Quran onzila ala sab'atu ahrofin ma minha Harfon ilia walahu zaahiron wa batanon Wa inna Ali Ibne Abi Taleb, Indahu minho zaahiro wal batin."

"Verily the Holy Quran has been revealed on Seven* Letters of which there is no letter* which has not a manifest and a latent meaning-And verily Ali ibne Abi Taleb, with him is the manifest and the latent (of it)."

(*Seven phases, or aspects)
Sahih Bokhari
Suyuti's Itqaan

THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD

(may the Peace of Allah be upon him and his Progeny) has said :

"He who dies in the love of my Progeny will be taken to Heaven just as a bride is taken to the bridegroom's house; he who dies in the love of my Progeny, Allah will open two doors of Paradise in his grave; he who dies in the love of my Progeny, Allah will make his grave a visiting place for the angels of mercy." "If you want to see knowledge of Adam, the piety of Noah, the devotion of Abraham, the awe of Moses and the service and abstinence of Jesus, look at the bright face of Ali." Qualities of a true Muslim.

May God bless the man who has heard His orders and remembered them; who was called by Him and obeyed the commands; who has affiliated himself to His Messenger and has thus secured his salvation; who has faithfully obeyed the commands and interdictions of his Preserver and Protector and fears the consequences of his sins; who has been sincere in doing such good deeds as will get him rewards in Heaven; who has always acted sinlessly, righteously and honourably; who has tried to earn His blessings and avoided vices and sin; who has discarded false pomp and glory of this world and concentrated in achieving an exalted position in the world to come; who has completely checked and restrained his desires and longings and kept his fancies and cravings under control; who has decided that patience on suffering is the best way to reach Heaven and abstinence from sin as the best mode of securing salvation; who has adopted the best of religions (Islam) as his creed and followed the bright path of truth and justice; who has correctly decided that the span of his life is a period of grace allotted to him to do good before his end and having provided himself for the next world is eager to welcome death.

Sermons of Hazrat Ali from Nahjul Balagha. (Sermon 79)

Those who have faith and do righteous deeds, They are the best of creatures, (Khair-ul-Baree'yya)

The Holy Quran-Sara xcvi : 7.